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Theodosia

THE

LIFE AND TIMES

OF

AARON BURR,

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL IN THE ARMY OF THE REVOLUTION,
UNITED STATES SENATOR, VICE-PRESIDENT OF
THE UNITED STATES, ETC.

BY

JAMES PARTON,

AUTHOR OF "LIFE OF ANDREW JACKSON," "LIFE AND TIMES OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN," "GENERAL BUTLER IN NEW ORLEANS," ETC.

ENLARGED EDITION,

WITH NUMEROUS APPENDICES, CONTAINING NEW AND INTERESTING INFORMATION.

VOL. II.

BOSTON:
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY.
The Riverside Press, Cambridge.
1881.

RIVERSIDE 1884

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1857,

By MASON BROTHERS,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of New York.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1864,

By MASON BROTHERS,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of New York.

HENRY BEYER,
Stereotyper and Electrotyper,
538 Broadway, N. Y.

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On the morning of the duel it chanced that one of Burr's cousins arrived in town from Connecticut, and made his way, about eight o'clock, to Richmond Hill. Alexis, the factotum of the establishment, obeyed his summons at the door, and showed him into the library, where he found Colonel Burr, alone, and engaged in his usual avocations. Burr received his young relative cordially, and, in every respect, as usual. Neither in his manner nor in his conversation was there any evidence of excitement or concern, nor any thing whatever to attract the notice of his guest. Except the master of the house, not a soul in Richmond Hill yet knew aught of that morning's work; nor indeed could it be said, in any sense of the word, that the master himself *knew* what he had done.

In a few minutes breakfast was announced, and the two gentlemen went to the dining-room and breakfasted together. The conversation was still quite in the ordinary strain, Burr inquiring after friends in the country, and the youth giving the information sought. After breakfast, the guest bade his host good-morning, and strolled off toward the city, which he reached about ten o'clock. As he walked down Broadway, he fancied he observed in passers-by the signs that something extraordinary had occurred or was expected. Near Wall-street, an acquaintance rushed up to him, breathless, and said,

"Colonel Burr has killed General Hamilton in a duel this morning."

"Why no he hasn't," replied the young gentleman, with the utmost positiveness, "I have just come from there and taken breakfast with him."

"But," replied the other, "I have this moment seen the news on the bulletin."

The cousin, reflecting for a moment on the absolute serenity f Burr's manner, and concluding that he would certainly have mentioned so interesting an occurrence if it had taken place, was still utterly incredulous, and, denouncing the report as false, went on his way. Before turning into Wall-street, he found the whole city astir, and soon had reason to suspect that the bulletin was only too true. So completely could Burr command his features and conceal his feelings.

Colonel Burr remained at or near Richmond Hill for eleven days after the duel. He was wholly unprepared for the excitement that arose. It never, before the duel, seemed once to have occurred to him that the public, which had seen with comparative indifference so many sanguinary conflicts of the kind, would discover any thing extraordinary in this one, whatever might be its result. He supposed, and had good reason to suppose, that, on the day before the duel, he was a more popular and a more important man than Hamilton. Was he not Vice-President? Had he not just been voted for by a majority of the freeholders of the city, in spite of Hamilton's most strenuous exertions? Yet, the day after the duel, the dying Hamilton had the heartfelt sympathy of every creature in the town, and Burr began to be regarded with abhorrence. "No one," said embittered John Adams, "wished to get rid of Hamilton in *that* way."

Soon after Hamilton died, Burr found it would be best for him to retire awhile from the scene of excitement. On Friday, he wrote thus to his son-in-law: "General Hamilton died yesterday. The malignant Federalists or Tories, and the embittered Clintonians, unite in endeavoring to excite public sympathy in his favor, and indignation against his antagonist. Thousands of absurd falsehoods are circulated with industry. The most illiberal means are practiced in order to produce excitement, and, for the moment, with effect.

"I propose leaving town for a few days, and meditate also a journey of some weeks, but whither is not resolved."

A week later, he wrote to the same person, that the duel had driven him into a sort of exile, and *might* terminate in an actual and permanent ostracism. "Our most unprincipled Jacobins," he continued, "are the loudest in their lamentations for the death of General Hamilton, whom, for many years, they have uniformly represented as the most detestable and unprincipled of men — the motives are obvious. Every sort of persecution is to be exercised against me. A coroner's jury will sit this evening, being the *fourth* time. The object of this unexampled measure is to obtain an inquest of murder. Upon this a warrant will be issued to apprehend me, and, if I should be taken, no bail would probably be allowed. You know enough of the temper and principles of the generality f the officers of our State government to form a judgment of my position.

"The statement (by Van Ness) in the *Morning Chronicle* was not submitted to my perusal, I being absent at the time of the publication. Several circumstances not very favorable to the deceased are suppressed; I presume, from holy reverence for the dead. I am waiting the report of this jury; when that is known, you shall be advised of my movements."

On Saturday evening (July 21st), a barge lay off a little wharf behind Richmond Hill. At ten o'clock, Burr, surrounded by a party of his friends, left his residence, and walked down to the river. The barge came alongside, when Burr, accompanied by his unswerving friend Swartwout, and a favorite servant, stepped on board. The boat was immediately pushed off, and its prow turned down the river. All night the bargemen plied their oars, while Burr and his companion lay in the stern, and, at intervals, slept. By nine o'clock on Sunday morning the boat was opposite the lawn of Commodore Truxton's residence at Perth Amboy, in New Jersey. What occurred there was related by the gallant commodore himself in a letter, which was published in the *Evening Post* a few days after.

"On Sunday morning," wrote Commodore Truxton, "be-

tween the hours of nine and ten o'clock, I was engaged in my study, when a servant came and said a gentleman wanted to see me. Supposing it to be one of my neighbors, I desired him to ask the gentleman to be seated in the drawing-room for a few minutes, and I would wait upon him. Soon after Mrs. Truxton came in, and told me it was the Vice-President. I immediately went down stairs, and a negro boy walked up to me, whom I did not at that moment recognize; he said that Colonel Burr was in a boat, and wished to see me. I went out, and discovered the boat that landed the boy laying off at a short distance from the shore, and the bargemen on their oars, keeping a position opposite to my landing-place.

"As soon as I approached near enough to the boat, the Vice-President and myself exchanged salutations. The boat then came in, when he landed immediately, as did Mr. Swartwout, whom he introduced me to, never having seen that gentleman before.

"In walking up to my house, the Vice-President told me they had been most of the night on the water, and a dish of good coffee would not come amiss. I told him it should be furnished with pleasure. As soon as we got on the piazza, I ordered breakfast, which was soon prepared, as the equipage of that meal was not yet removed below.

"After breakfast, Mr. Swartwout returned to New York, and the Vice-President asked me if horses were to be procured to take him on his journey further southward. Not believing, as it was Sunday (and as I was afterward informed), that he could be accommodated with convenience in this respect, I told him so, and that he must content himself where he was. On Monday morning, however, I ordered up my own horses and carriage, and took him to Cranberry, about twenty miles from this place, where he hired a carriage and horses to proceed with him to the Delaware, and I returned home. During the time Colonel Burr was with me, but little was said of the duel; delicacy on his part, as well as mine, prevented such conversation. He appeared to me to feel much more sorrow and regret than I have observed in any other person on the occasion, though I have seen many

who expressed unfeigned regret, and I was certain that they felt it.

"In conversation I took an opportunity of observing my own feelings on the subject, and that General Hamilton I had esteemed as an invaluable friend, statesman, and soldier; that as a politician, I admired him always, and, in fact, loved him as a brother. These expressions were made rather involuntarily, and I was sorry I made them, as they excited an increased emotion in the breast of Colonel Burr, which ought not to have been made by me, but it seemed unavoidable. I added, at the same time, that I had, and always had, an unfeigned and sincere regard for Colonel Burr, and that while I regretted the past event, I at the same time gave him a hearty welcome, as I should have done General Hamilton, had the fate of their interview been reversed, and he had made me a visit. I have taken time and pains to recollect and relate, as nearly verbatim as possible, every material expression on the subject, introduced in consequence of the unfortunate catastrophe, or that passed between us; and hope it will prevent any further misrepresentation, at least as far as you can prevent it.

"The difference of these two gents' political opinions, I could not but know; but notwithstanding this difference, I had often met them together when the demon of discord, in no instance, excited an expression or gesture in the one that could disturb the harmonious feelings of the other. But I always observed in both a disposition when together to make time agreeable, according to the end intended by such meetings in society, at the houses of each other, and of friends and it was never, until the unhappy affair of a duel was announced here, that I could have believed such a business was in contemplation between those gentlemen.

"No man, sir, can lament this sad event more sincerely than I do; and particularly since I have examined the correspondence and other papers on the subject. But let the melancholy lesson teach the inconsiderate that while any gentleman may express his opinion of men and things as he pleases, whether by letter or otherwise, under his own responsibility,

that he should be cautious how he implicates or commits others; who in good faith, perhaps, and in private conversation, communicate sentiments never intended for the public ear. That such conversations daily happen among gentlemen, there can be no doubt; but for the honor of society, they are but seldom promulgated to the world without permission, or by some uncommon accident."

From Cranberry, Colonel Burr was conveyed in a light wagon to the ferry at Bristol, whence he crossed into Pennsylvania, and so, by back roads, made his way, *incog.*, to Philadelphia. News traveled slowly at that day. At a tavern in Pennsylvania, the landlord, who knew the fugitive, accosted him by name, but was immediately silenced, and put on his guard. Burr found that the duel, which had been fought thirteen days before, had not yet been heard of in the village. Reaching Philadelphia in safety, he was welcomed to the house of his old friend, Dallas, and, at once, appeared in the streets, on foot and on horseback, exactly as if nothing was the matter; or, to use the language of the *Trenton Federalist*, "he had the hardihood to show himself in the streets." A slight indisposition having withdrawn him from public observation, for a day or two, he was reported to be dangerously sick. "What!" exclaimed the pious Cheetham, "has the vengeance of God overtaken him so soon?"

The last days of July wore away, and Burr was still waiting to hear the result of the coroner's inquest. This was not rendered till the 2d of August, at two o'clock in the morning. John Swartwout immediately dispatched an express to Van Ness who was secreted in the country, and to Burr at Philadelphia. He added, that the excitement was subsiding in New York, and that Burr's old friends were "rapidly traveling back to 1800. Governor Lewis," he said, "speaks of the proceedings openly as disgraceful, illiberal, and ungentlemanly. In short, a little more noise on their side, and a little further magnanimity on ours, is all that is necessary. In all this bustle, judicious men see nothing but the workings of the meanest passions."

Warrants were immediately issued for the arrest of the

principal and the two seconds. Burr foresaw that, in the present state of the public mind, Governor Lewis would be compelled to demand his surrender from the Governor of Pennsylvania, who would be obliged to order his arrest. In this extremity, he offered to surrender on condition of receiving a guaranty that he should be released on bail. This could not be. In the midst of a pleasant renewal of his flirtation with Celeste, which promised now to have a serious issue, he was compelled to make preparations for an immediate flight. "If any male friend of yours," he wrote to his daughter, "should be dying of *ennui*, recommend to him to engage in a duel and a courtship at the same time." He tells her that the stories afloat in the papers of attempts to assassinate him are all fables. "Those who wish me dead prefer to keep at a very respectful distance."

Had he no feeling, then? Did he not deplore the domestic ruin which the duel had caused? The reader who desires to be as just to an execrated as to an honored name, will give due weight to the circumstances of the man. Before the better feelings of the heart had time to wake, he became himself an object of what he thought persecution, and persecution set on foot by political enemies for party purposes. Even John Adams thought that the prodigious demonstrations of respect and sorrow which the death of Hamilton elicited, were paid to the *Federalist* more than to the *man*. It was, moreover, one of the ruling principles of Burr's life, inculcated by word and example, to make little of life's miseries, and much of its pleasures. The man who made that wife a widow, and those children fatherless, was not, as he thought, Aaron Burr, but Alexander Hamilton; and if a similar or equal bereavement had occurred to himself, he would have accepted the inevitable stroke, and gone on his way silent and composed. He always made light of such unavoidable calamities as death. A letter which he wrote during one of the yellow-fever periods in New York, began like this: "We die reasonably fast. Mrs. Jones died last night; but then Mrs. Smith had twins this morning; so the account is even." This soldierly hard

ness of character he cultivated, and recommended, and, perhaps, sometimes *affected.*

The charitable mind that reflects upon this duel will curse anew that wretched system of morals which puts Honor for Honesty, and Pride for Principle; but will not too severely condemn the man who, in common with thousands of the bright est spirits of his time and country, received that system for lack of a better, and lived up to it—to his ruin.

About the middle of August, Colonel Burr, accompanied by Samuel Swartwout (a younger brother of the indomitable John), and attended by his favorite slave, Peter, a good-humored blunderer of fifteen, secretly embarked for St. Simon's, an island off the coast of Georgia, then the residence of a few wealthy planters. He had old friends upon this island, and the arrival of a Vice-President was itself an event to excite the few inhabitants of a place so remote from the great world. He was welcomed, on his arrival, to a mansion luxurious and hospitable, and the resources of the island were placed at his disposal. He was serenaded by the island's only band of music. He saw no more averted faces and lowering brows, and heard no more muttered execrations, as he passed. His southern friends, he found, had very different feelings with regard to the duel from the people at the North, and the society of St. Simon's bestowed every mark of consideration upon him that hospitable minds could suggest. "You have no idea," he wrote to Theodosia, "of the zeal and animation, of the intrepidity and frankness, with which Major Butler (his host) avowed and maintained — but I forget that this letter goes to Savannah by a negro, who has to swim half a dozen creeks, in one of which, *at least*, it is probable he may drown, and that, if he escape drowning, various other acci dents may bring it to you through the newspapers, and then how many enemies might my indiscretion create for a man who had the sensibility and the honor to feel and to judge, and the firmness to avow —."

After a month's detention at St. Simon's by the devastations of a hurricane, he crossed to the main land, and made his way with immense difficulties, traveling four hundred miles of the

distance in an open canoe, to his daughter's home in South Carolina. He was almost black from exposure when he arrived. Theodosia had passionately longed for his coming. She and her husband were devoted to him, believed in him utterly, and saw the late affair only with his eyes. Ten days of happy repose, and cordial, intimate intercourse, passed too swiftly. Then he set out on the long land-journey to Washington, where he was resolved to appear on the assembling of Congress, and perform his duty as President of the Senate.

At Petersburg, in Virginia, Burr was surprised by the warmth of his reception. The hot Republicans there, headed by a Mr. O'Keefe, renowned for the fury of his politics and of his temper (he afterward fell in a political duel) arranged a demonstration for the destroyer of the arch-foe of democracy. An invitation from the Republican citizens of the place to a public dinner, was communicated to Burr through the mayor, and couched in terms audaciously flattering, and intended tc reflect on the contrary feeling that prevailed in the northern States. Burr accepted. The dinner was attended by fifty or sixty Republicans, who received, toasted, and listened to the Vice-President with enthusiasm. After dinner, twenty of the hilarious Democrats accompanied him to the theater, where the audience rose at his entrance and cheered. "Virginia," he wrote to his daughter, "is the last State, and Petersburg the last town in the State, in which I should have expected any open marks of hospitality and respect."

While these scenes were passing in Virginia, two other States were waiting to try him for murder. The duel having been fought in New Jersey, certain Federalists of that State succeeded, three months after, in getting Dr. Mason, one of the clergymen who had attended Hamilton, to give testimony on which to found an indictment. Burr was indicted accord ingly. In New York, the evidence had been given by Bishop Moore, who administered the communion to the dying man. But for those two clergymen's second-hand testimony, there would never have existed a word of legal evidence that the duel had been fought.

On reaching Washington, he was greeted with the tidings

of this new indictment. "You have doubtless heard," he wrote to his daughter, "that there has subsisted for some time a contention of a very singular nature between the two States of New York and New Jersey. * * * The subject in dispute is, which shall have the honor of hanging the Vice-President. * * * You shall have due notice of time and place. Whenever it may be, you may rely on a great concourse of company, much gayety, and many rare sights."

But the question was never decided. Commodore Biddle and Attorney-General Dallas, wrote a joint letter to Governor Bloomfield of New Jersey, who was himself a particular friend of Burr's, urging him not to prosecute. The leading Republican Senators addressed a similar letter to the governor. It was soon understood, that though nothing favorable to Burr could be openly done, he should not be molested. Among the officials, and in the society of Washington, during his last winter there, he was received with, at least, as much consideration as before. The President seems to have been *more* complaisant than usual. He gave one or two appointments to Burr's particular friends, this winter. General Wilkinson was made governor of the newly-acquired territory of Louisiana, and Dr. Brown secretary; the latter appointment being certainly made at Burr's request.

For the exit of this "well-graced actor" from the drama of public life, an imposing pageant was preparing. The Senate, during this session, was to try Judge Chace, who had been impeached by the House of Representatives. Chace was a Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States, an able, prejudiced, arrogant man, who, it was charged, had grossly abused the authority of the bench in certain political trials. The impeachment created an intense interest, and the trial attracted a concourse of people to Washington. Under the direction of the Vice-President, the Senate Chamber was fitted up in superb style, with seats and subdivisions for all the dignitaries of the nation, as well as for foreign embassadors and spectators. The Senators, as judges of this high court, were placed in a grand semicircle, on each side of the Vice-President, an awful array of judicial authority. Temporary

galleries were erected, and draped with blue cloth, part of which the Vice-President, with his usual gallantry, appropriated to the ladies. The scene presented, while the trial was in progress, as described minutely in the papers of the day, must have been extremely striking.

The trial began on the 4th of February, and ended, in a verdict of acquittal, on the 1st of March. The dignity, the grace, the fairness, the prompt, intelligent decision with which the Vice-President presided over the august court, extorted praise even from his enemies. "He conducted the trial," said a newspaper of the day, "with the dignity and impartiality of an angel, but with the rigor of a devil." There was a rising tide of reaction in his favor, during the closing days of his public life, which, taken at the flood, might have led, if not to fortune, yet to an endurable existence among his countrymen.

The day after the conclusion of the trial, the Vice-President took formal leave of the Senate, in a speech which produced an unexpected and profound sensation. I find an imperfect report of it copied into Federal and Republican papers of the time, and in a monthly magazine published in New York. It appeared, also, in European papers, both English and continental; for the late events had made the names of Hamilton and Burr familiar to the whole world. The *Washington Federalist* gave the original report, which was prepared, at the editor's request, by an unknown hand. The following is a copy:

"On Saturday, the 2d of March, 1805," began the reporter, "Mr. Burr took leave of the Senate. This was done at a time when the doors were closed; the Senate being engaged in executive business, and, of course, there were no spectators. It is, however, said to be the most dignified, sublime, and impressive that ever was uttered; and the effect which it produced justifies these epithets. I will give you the best account I have been able to obtain, from the relation of several Senators, as well Federal as Republican.

"Mr. Burr began by saying that he had intended to pass the day with them, but the increase of a slight indisposition

had determined him then to take leave of them. He touched lightly on some of the rules and orders of the House, and recommended, in one or two points, alterations, of which he briefly explained the reasons and principles.

"He said he was sensible he must at times have wounded the feelings of individual members. He had ever avoided entering into explanations at the time, because a moment of irritation was not a moment for explanation; because his position (being in the chair) rendered it impossible to enter into explanation, without obvious danger of consequences which might hazard the dignity of the Senate, or prove disagreeable and injurious in more than one point of view; that he had, therefore, preferred to leave to their reflections his justification; that, on his part, he had no injuries to complain of: if any had been done or attempted, he was ignorant of the authors; and if he had ever heard he had forgotten, for, he thanked God, he had no memory for injuries.

"He doubted not but that they had found occasion to observe that to be prompt was not therefore to be precipitate; and that to act without delay was not always to act without reflection; that error was often to be preferred to indecision; that his errors, whatever they might have been, were those of rule and principle, and not of caprice; that it could not be deemed arrogance in him to say that, in his official conduct, he had known no party — no cause — no friend; that if, in the opinion of any, the discipline which had been established approached to rigor, they would at least admit that it was uniform and indiscriminate.

"He further remarked, that the ignorant and unthinking affected to treat as unnecessary and fastidious a rigid attention to rules and decorum; but he thought nothing trivial which touched, however remotely, the dignity of that body; and he appealed to their experience for the justice of this sentiment, and urged them in language the most impressive, and in a manner the most commanding, to avoid the smallest relaxation of the habits which he had endeavored to inculcate and establish.

"But he challenged their attention to considerations more

momentous than any which regarded merely their personal honor and character — the preservation of law, of liberty, and the Constitution. This House, said he, is a sanctuary; a citadel of law, of order, and of liberty; and it is here — it is here, in this exalted refuge — here, if any where, will resistnce be made to the storms of political frenzy and the silent arts of corruption; and if the Constitution be destined ever to perish by the sacrilegious hands of the demagogue or the usurper, which God avert, its expiring agonies will be witnessed on this floor.

"He then adverted to those affecting sentiments which attended a final separation — a dissolution, perhaps for ever, of those associations which he hoped had been mutually satisfactory. He consoled himself, however, and them, with the reflection that, though they separated, they would be engaged in the common cause of disseminating principles of freedom and social order. He should always regard the proceedings of that body with interest and with solicitude. He should feel for their honor and the national honor so intimately connected with it, and took his leave with expressions of personal respect, and with prayers and wishes.

"In this cold relation a distant reader, especially one to whom Colonel Burr is not personally known, will be at a loss to discover the cause of those extraordinary emotions which were excited. The whole Senate were in tears, and so unmanned that it was half an hour before they could recover themselves sufficiently to come to order, and choose a Vice-President *pro tem.*

"At the President's, on Monday, two of the Senators were relating these circumstances to a circle which had collected round them. One said that he wished that the tradition might be preserved as one of the most extraordinary events he had ever witnessed. Another Senator being asked, on the day following that on which Mr. Burr took his leave, how long he was speaking, after a moment's pause, said he could form no idea; it might have been an hour, and it might have been but a moment; when he came to his senses, he seemed to have awakened as from a kind of trance.

"The characteristics of the Vice-President's manner seemed to have been elevation and dignity — a consciousness of superiority. Nothing of that whining adulation; those canting, hypocritical complaints of want of talents; assurance of his endeavors to please them; hopes of their favor, etc. On the contrary, he told them explicitly that he had determined to pursue a conduct which his judgment should approve, and which should secure the suffrage of his own conscience, and that he had never considered who else might be pleased or displeased; although it was but justice on this occasion to thank them for their deference and respect to his official conduct — the constant and uniform support he had received from every member — for their prompt acquiescence in his decisions; and to remark, to their honor, that they had never descended to a single motion of passion or embarrassment; and so far was he from apologizing for his defects, that he told them that, on reviewing the decisions he had had occasion to make, there was no one which, on reflection, he was disposed to vary or retract.

"As soon as the Senate could compose themselves sufficiently to choose a President *pro tem.*, they came to the following resolution:

"Resolved, unanimously, That the thanks of the Senate be presented to *Aaron Burr*, in testimony of the impartiality, dignity, and ability, with which he has presided over their deliberations, and of their entire approbation of his conduct in the discharge of the arduous and important duties assigned him as President of the Senate; and that Mr. Smith, of Maryland, and Mr. White, be a committee to wait on him with this resolution.

"To which resolution Colonel Burr returned the following answer to the Senate:

"Next to the satisfaction arising from a consciousness of having discharged my duty, is that which is derived from the approbation of those who have been the constant witnesses of my conduct, and the value of this testimony of their esteem is greatly enhanced by the promptitude and unanimity with which it is offered.

"I pray you to accept my respectful acknowledgments, and the assurance of my inviolable attachment to the interests and dignity of the Senate."

In remarking upon this report, Burr wrote: "It is true, that I made a talk, as was decent and proper, to the Senate on leaving them formally. There was nothing written or prepared, except that it had been some days on my mind to say something. It was the solemnity, the anxiety, the expectation, and the interest which I saw strongly painted in the countenances of the auditors, that inspired whatever was said. I neither shed tears nor assumed tenderness; but tears did flow abundantly. The story in this newspaper is rather awkwardly and pompously told. It has been gathered up, I presume, from different relations of the facts. This newspaper has been for months past, and, for aught I know (for I read none of them), still is, one of the most abusive against A. Burr."

Some of the Senators were not long in regaining their composure; for the usual resolution granting a perpetuity of the franking privilege to the retiring Vice-President, was not passed unanimously — as such resolutions generally are. It was doubtful, for a time, whether it would pass at all; but was finally passed by a vote of 18 to 13.

On the 4th of March, Jefferson, with the acclamations of a party, that was then almost *the nation*, was sworn, a second time, into the presidential office. George Clinton, the head of the family whom Burr regarded as his chief enemies, became Vice-President. Aaron Burr vanished from the political arena, never to re-appear thereon, except in the persons of those whom he formed and influenced, and through whom, a quarter of a century later, he overturned the Virginian dynasty.

During his absence at the South, Richmond Hill had been forced to a sale for twenty-five thousand dollars, and the amount appropriated to the payment of his debts. The sum realized was not enough; he still owed between seven and eight thousand dollars in the city, for which his *person* would be liable if he should appear there. A few thousands were owed to him, which, as affairs then stood, could not be col-

lected. His library and wine were still unsold. Probably, if a balance had been struck, it would have been found that he was about five thousand dollars less than solvent; but, in effect, he was worse off than that; for his debts were unequivocal, his assets unavailable, his income nothing, his practice gone, his native and his adopted States both closed upon him He was what is commonly called a ruined man.

"In New York," he wrote to his son-in-law, "I am to be disfranchised, and in New Jersey hanged. Having substantial objections to both, I shall not, for the present, hazard either, but shall seek another country. You will not, from this, conclude that I have become passive, or disposed to submit tamely to the machinations of a banditti. If you should you would greatly err. ——— and his clan affect to deplore, but secretly rejoice at and stimulate the villainies of all sorts which are practiced against me. Their alarm and anxiety, however, are palpable to a degree perfectly ridiculous. Their awkward attempt to propitiate reminds one of the Indian worship of the evil spirit. God bless you ever."

He was full of confidence in himself and hope for the future. Many of his old friends went from New York to Philadelphia on purpose to visit him, after his return from Washington, and they found him the same gay, busy, indomitable Burr they had known in the palmiest days of his past career.

What next, then? Ay, What next?

Every lover of gossip in the United States, or, in other words, every sane inhabitant of the United States, was asking this question in the spring of 1805. What will Burr do now? Where will he go? For ten years past, he had filled a large place in the public view, and recent events had fixed all eyes upon him. In every part of the country, he had strong personal friends, men who had supported and worked hard for him in hotly-contested campaigns — women who had loved his black eyes, and thought him a knight without fear and without reproach. His portrait hung upon walls, his bust stood upon mantels. Always a man of whom anecdotes were told, he was now the subject of a thousand preposterous rumors, and the hero of a thousand groundless or exaggerated tales.

He was regarded as a *mysterious* being, a man of unfathomable purposes, and able to bend all things and persons to his will. The public mind was prepared to believe any thing of Burr, provided only that it was sufficiently incredible!

The reader is entreated to give due consideration to the fact just mentioned, for it is a clew which may guide us through the laybrinth we are about to attempt. I have groped in it long, as others have before me. It is tortuous and heaped with falsehoods, as surely no other 'passage' of history ever was before. I invite the reader to enter, and follow the path which lead me to — what looks like daylight.

CHAPTER XXI.

HE SEEKS A NEW COUNTRY.

Louisiana Ours — Burr's Friends in the Western Country — General Wilkinson — The Great West in 1805 — Burr goes West — Narrative of Matthew Lyon — The Voyage down the Ohio — Blennerhassett Island — Grand Reception at Nashville — Arrival in New Orleans — New Orleans then — His Life there — Return Eastward — Burr suspected by the Spaniards — Journey through Kentucky — Letter of Clark to Wilkinson — Interview Between Wilkinson and Burr — Mysterious Letter from Burr to Wilkinson — Correspondence Between Burr and Blennerhassett — Interview Between Burr and Jefferson — Further Spanish Aggressions.

On Monday the 29th of December, 1803, at noon, the tri-colored flag of France, which floated from the staff in the public square of New Orleans, and upon which the eyes of expectant thousands were fixed, began to descend. At the same moment, the stars and stripes of the American Union appeared above the crowd, and slowly mounted the staff. Midway, the two standards met, and, for a minute or two, were lost in each other's friendly folds. Then, amid the thunders of cannon, the music of Hail Columbia, the cheers of the spectators, the waving of handkerchiefs and banners, the tri-color continued its descent to the ground, and the flag of the United States soared rapidly aloft, and flung out its folds to the breeze on the summit of the mast.

Louisiana was ours! The mouths of the Mississippi were free! The prosperity of the great valley was secure! The tide of emigration, for sixteen years held in check by the intolerance of the Spaniards, was now free to pour itself into the most productive region of the earth! The insolence of the Dons, whom every western man had learned to despise and detest, was signally rebuked!

Colonel Burr, now without a country, was one of the thousands who were looking westward, as the scene of a new

career. He was resolved, at least, to see the region which seemed to present to men of energy such boundless opportunities. He had many friends at the West — old army acquaintances, members of Congress with whom he had acted, Senators over whom he had presided. In 1796, when the Federalists had delayed the admission of Tennessee into the Union, Burr had been zealous in her cause, and thereby won great popularity in the new State. General Jackson had appeared on the scene as her representative in Congress; "a tall, lank, uncouth-looking personage, with long locks of hair hanging over his face, and a queue down his back tied in an eel-skin; his dress singular, his manners and deportment those of a rough backwoodsman."* With him, it was natural that Burr should become intimate. Dayton, formerly Speaker of the House, recently a Senator from New Jersey, a near relative of Burr's old Elizabethtown friend, Matthew Ogden, went westward in the spring of 1805. John Smith, a self-made man of spirit and talent, lately a Senator from Ohio, now one of the chief men of that vigorous young State, was another of Burr's friends. Matthew Lyon, a noted ultra Democrat of that day, who had been estranged from Burr during the two intrigues of 1801, but was now well-disposed toward him because he thought him a persecuted man, had also removed to the far West. All over the valley of the Mississippi, there were men who resented the late proceedings in New York and New Jersey, and were ready to go all lengths in showing respect to a man whom they regarded in the light of a martyr to Federal machinations and puritanic bigotry.

Burr's oldest friend in the West was General Wilkinson commander-in-chief of the army, and recently appointed Governor of Louisiana. Wilkinson and Burr had climbed together the heights of Quebec, and formed, amid those scenes the friendship which fellow-soldiers know. They had seldom met since, but had corresponded, confidentially and in cipher, at intervals, for many years. In 1787, Wilkinson had emigrated to New Orleans, then a Spanish port, where, till 1791,

* Recollections of Albert Gallatin, quoted by Mr. Hildredth in his History of the United States.

he had traded in tobacco, a subject, by residence, of the King of Spain. Not prospering in trade, he resumed his military career in 1791, and obtained command of the western posts.

The character of this man was not unblemished. It is certain that he was extravagant, fond of the table, fond of show, boastful, and otherwise weak. It was Wilkinson, the reader may remember, who, as aid-de-camp to Gates in 1777, *blabbed* to Lord Stirling an expression used by Conway to Gates, disparaging the generalship of Washington, which led to Conway's ruin, and to much other embarrassment and difficulty. There is strong (but not convincing) evidence, that while holding a commission in the American army, he had been a pensioner of the King of Spain. There was a party in the West, in 1796, who favored a separation of the western States from the Union. Wilkinson was of that party, and had dreams of leading the revolt, and becoming, to use his own words, "the Washington of the West." The Spanish viceroy favored a project calculated to weaken a neighbor that was growing portentously powerful, and of whom the home government was beginning to stand in dread. Unless the evidence on this point is flat perjury (which, indeed, it may be), Wilkinson was paid by the Spanish to promote the scheme, and drew up, for the viceroy, a list of the leading citizens of Kentucky known to be disaffected to the Union, who, he thought, would also accept money for the same purpose. Daniel Clark swears that he saw this list in Wilkinson's hand-writing, and that Wilkinson confessed, in effect, that he had been himself a pensioner.*

The reader must be reminded that, during the administration of John Adams, the Union, to backwoodsmen, had not the sacred charm it has since possessed. The noise of party contention filled the land. The Union, as Wilkinson himself

* There is a portrait of General Wilkinson in the Hall of Independence at Philadelphia, which represents him as a portly, red-faced individual, dressed in the blue and yellow uniform of the Revolution. The portrait confirms the impression, derived from the writings of the time, that he was a *bon vivant*, merry, extravagant, boastful — the last man for a conspirator, though of easy virtue enough.

said, seemed to hang together by a thread, which any moment might break. Western men could not but speculate upon the effect a disruption would have upon their own political condition. Wilkinson may have thought of hastening the catastrophe, of founding a western republic, and of becoming its Washington, without being, in any sense of the word, a traitor.

Nor, in 1805, was the great West quite content. The acquisition of Louisiana had reduced the malcontents to a very inconsiderable minority, but there were still those who were dissatisfied with the monopolizing of the great federal offices by the politicians of the East, and who thought it absurd and undesirable to be connected with a government whose capital was a two months' journey distant. Nine tenths of the people, however, though they may all have grumbled a little, were attached to the Union, were proud of its President, were fervently devoted to the democratic ideas which he had made familiar to their minds.

And now Aaron Burr was to traverse this magnificent domain. A variety of projects lay half-formed in his mind — projects of land speculation, of canal-making, of settling in some rising city of the West in the practice of the law, of beginning anew his political life as the representative of a new State in Congress. If more ambitious schemes agitated him, they were concealed; neither in his diary, nor in his voluminous correspondence, published or unpublished, is there the slightest reference to any but ordinary and legitimate objects during the year 1805. The project of getting himself elected a member of Congress, was not, it seems, his own idea. On this point we have the testimony of Matthew Lyon, who, when all the world was exculpating itself from participation in Burr's plans, wrote a graphic narrative of certain events which preceded Burr's departure for the land of promise. Amid the heaps of dull, false, and semi-false statements which the events of the following year called forth, this narrative of a disinterested witness is particularly interesting. I quote the material part of Mr. Lyon's deposition:

"Some time in the winter, 1805, coming one morning (to

Washington) from Alexandria, by way of the navy-yard, and passing by the house where General Wilkinson lived, he called on me to come in; after congratulating him on his appointment as governor, and some other conversation, Colonel Burr's name was mentioned. Colonel Burr had no claim to friendly attentions from me. I had no acquaintance with him before the contest concerning the presidential election. I had resisted the solicitations of my friends, who wished to introduce me to him in March, 1801, on account of his misconduct in that affair; yet when I saw him persecuted for what I considered no more than fair play among duelists, I advocated him; this brought about an acquaintance, by no means intimate. In the course of the conversation between the general and myself, we regretted the loss of so much talent as Colonel Burr possessed; we viewed him on the brink of a precipice, from which, in a few days, he must fall; from the second station in the nation, he must fall to that of a private citizen.

"The general entered warmly into his praise, and talked of a foreign embassy for him. This I assured him could not be obtained. The general then asked me if I could not think of something which would do for the little counselor? I replied, that he might very readily become a member of the Congress, which was to meet the coming winter, and in the state of parties, considering the éclât with which he was likely to leave the Senate, he might very probably be Speaker.

"The general was anxious to know how he could be elected to Congress. I explained. Let Colonel Burr mount his horse the 4th of March, and ride through Virginia to Tennessee, giving out that he intends settling at Nashville, in the practice of the law. Let him commence the practice, and fix himself a home there; his renconter with General Hamilton will no injure him. Let him attend the courts in that district. Let him in July next intimate to some of the numerous friends (his preëminent talents and suavity of manners will have made for him) that he would willingly serve the district in Congress. They will set the thing on foot, and he is sure to be elected, there is no constitutional bar in the way.

"As I finished this explanation, the general rose, and, in a

seeming ecstasy, clapped his hands on my shoulders, exclaiming with an oath, 'This will do! — it is a heavenly thought — worthy of him who thought it!' He rang the bell, ordered his boots, and said he would go instantly and inform the little counselor, and would call on me in the House in the course of two or three hours. He did so, and informed me he had, at Colonel Burr's request, made an appointment for me to call on him.

"I was punctual. Colonel Burr lived at Mr. Wheaton's, near the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue, not far from Rhoades's. It was in the evening. I knocked, or pulled the bell, several times, before a servant came, who informed me that Colonel Burr was not to be seen, he was engaged with company. I gave the servant my name, and directed him to go and tell Colonel Burr that I had called. Colonel Burr came, and invited me up stairs, and requested me to sit with Mrs. Wheaton half an hour, when he would be with me. In about three quarters of an hour he came, and apologized for his delay. I observed to him that he had a large company, among whom I recognized the voices of Generals Wilkinson and Dayton, although I had not heard of the latter gent's being in town. I hoped he had not hurried himself from them on account of seeing me; that I had been well entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Wheaton, and would have been so an hour or two longer, if he wished to remain with his company.

"Colonel Burr said the meeting was about some land concern in the western country; that they had gone as far as they could with it at that time; my coming had been no interruption; he was very glad to see me, and soon commenced on the subject of the coming election in Tennessee. I repeated what I said to General Wilkinson. He admitted the possibility of success in the course I pointed out; but did not seem to be so much enamored with the project as General Wilkinson. He said he was obliged on the 4th of March to go to Philadelphia; from thence he would go to Pittsburg, and thence to the western country by water. I offered him a passage in my boat from Pittsburg, if he should be there when I should have done my business on the Monongahela,

and descended to Pittsburg. I assured him, however, all chance of obtaining the election in Tennessee, would be jeopardised, if not lost, by such a delay. He told me he had ordered a boat prepared for him at Pittsburg, and he talked as if his business at Philadelphia was indispensable, as well as his voyage down the Ohio.

"In stating this conversation, I give the substance of all the other conversations I had that winter with Colonel Burr, at Washington, except that, in some of them, the embassy was talked of. He observed, that my friend Wilkinson thought I would be a proper person, in a blunt way, to mention it to the President. He asked me, if I dared tell the President that he ought to send Colonel Burr on the foreign embassy talked of? I told him very bluntly, I would not."

This ended the intercourse of the three friends in Washington. Lyon started homeward. About the 10th of April, Colonel Burr left Philadelphia for Pittsburg, where he arrived after nineteen days' riding.

The boat which he had ordered was ready, and on the following morning he found himself floating down the Ohio. His boat was a rude floating house, or ark, sixty feet long and fourteen wide, containing four apartments, a dining-room, a kitchen with fire-place, and two bed-rooms, all lighted by glass windows, and the whole covered by a roof, which served as a promenade deck. The cost of this commodious structure, he found, to his astonishment, was only a hundred and thirty-three dollars. Of propelling power it had none, but merely floated down the swift and winding stream, aided occasionally, and kept clear of snags and sand-banks, by a dexterous use of the pole. In the spring, the current of the Ohio rushes along with surprising swiftness, carrying with it an ark or raft eight miles an hour. It would be a resistless torrent at that season but for its innumerable bends. Along its whole course, hills steep, picturesque, and lofty, rise almost from the bed of the river, and pour their streams headlong into it, whenever the rain falls or the snow melts. For hundreds and hundreds of miles, this most monotonously beautiful of rivers winds and coils itself about among those never-varying, seldom-receding hills,

skirted by a narrow fringe of bottom lands. Those hills, soon to be "vine-clad," were then one forest; those bottoms, now smiling with farms, or disfigured by the shabbiest of towns and villages, were then destitute of inhabitants, for hundreds of miles at a stretch.

Colonel Burr was always a swift traveler. Lyon had nearly two days' start, but was overtaken by him in a day and a half. The two boats, in the social fashion of the time, were then lashed together, and floated in company for four days. Passed Wheeling on the 3d of April, a neat, pretty village, of sixty or eighty houses; where Burr observed several well-dressed women, who had the air of fashion and movements of "*you others* on the coast." Passed Marietta on the 5th; where he saw houses that would be called handsome anywhere. The leading gentlemen of the place called to offer civilities and hospitalities. The voyagers all walked several miles to see the mounds and other antiquities near Marietta, which quite puzzled the voyager in chief—as they have wiser men. At Marietta the two boats parted company, and Burr continued his voyage alone.

A few miles below Marietta, is the far-famed Blennerhassett Island. It is an island nearly three miles long, but so narrow that it contains less than three hundred acres of land. The river on each side is narrow enough to admit of conversation between the island and the shore. Beyond the river, on each side of it, swell aloft, like dark clouds, the picturesque hills of the Ohio, forest-covered and forest-crowned, shutting in the little island from all the world. Here it was that Harman Blennerhassett, an eccentric, romantic, idle, 'shiftless' Irishman, had contrived to expend forty thousand dollars (nearly all his fortune) in building a house of original ugliness, and in laying out grounds remotely resembling those of country houses in the old country. The picture of this celebrated mansion suggests, to one who has not read Mr. Wirt's oration upon it, the idea of a semicircular barracks. A fair-sized, very plain, two story wooden house, with curved wings of one story, the front connected into a whole by a piazza — is the brief description of this celebrated abode. The semicircular

front was one hundred and four feet from tip to tip. A lawn surrounded with trees and encircled by a carriage road, lay in front of the house. Further off there were gardens, groves, fields, and bits of primeval wilderness; the whole forming a pleasant, but by no means a very sumptuous or beautiful, residence. After spending eight years in subduing the island wilderness, Mr. Blennerhassett still saw his work incomplete, and, what was worse, he was beginning to catch glimpses of the end of his purse.

Colonel Burr had heard vaguely that some eccentric foreigner lived upon this island, and, from curiosity only, landed, and moored his floating home to the shore. Learning that the lord of the isle was absent, he and his companion strolled about the grounds awhile, and was about leaving when Mrs. Blennerhassett sent a servant to invite the strangers to the house, as her husband would soon return. Burr replied by sending his card, and declining the invitation, as he said curiosity alone had induced him to land. The lady, upon learning the name of the stranger, came out to see him, and so pressingly invited him to stay, that he yielded, dined with the family, conversed with them till eleven in the evening, and then continued his voyage. Mrs. Blennerhassett was an energetic, accomplished, amiable woman, but not remarkable for beauty or style. She was exceedingly pleased with her visitor, and remained his fast, admiring friend, through all the long series of events that followed this first interview. Her husband was equally captivated.

Three hundred miles below is Cincinnati, then a town of fifteen hundred inhabitants (now two hundred thousand), which he reached in six days' floating. There he spent a day at the house of ex-Senator John Smith, and met his friend Dayton, whose fortunes were to be bound up with his own. From the chief people of the place, he received the attentions which had greeted him everywhere west of the Alleghanies.

At Louisville, then called the Falls of the Ohio, he again overtook Matthew Lyon. "There," continues Mr. Lyon, "I repeated to him that the delay he had made had ruined his prospect of election, as that prospect depended solely on

domestication. At the falls, he changed his flat for a small boat, which he ordered to Eddyville (where I live), and rode to Nashville.

"The newspapers described his arrival and reception there as one of the most magnificent parades that had ever been made at that place They contained lists of toasts, and great dinners given in honor of Colonel Burr, every body at and near Nashville seeming to be contending for the honor of having best treated or served Colonel Burr.

"This I had expected; and when Colonel Burr called on me, on his way from Nashville to his boat, I inquired if any thing had been said about the election. He answered, 'Not one word.' I observed that he ought to think no more of it. In answer, he said he had little doubt of being elected delegate from Orleans Territory, but he would choose to be a member, and insisted that I should write to a friend of mine (who had paid him the most marked attention) to see if the thing could be yet set afloat, and to inform him he would be a resident in Tennessee. At the time of the election, he requested me to communicate the answer to him at Natchez. I complied with his wishes, the answer I received being unfavorable to him."

Mr. Lyon adds, that what he did for Colonel Burr in the election, was done chiefly to oblige General Wilkinson. Being asked whether, in his opinion, Burr was sincere in desiring an election, Lyon replied: "No doubt he would have been sincerely rejoiced to have been elected." But he added, "There seemed too much mystery in his conduct. I suspected him to have other objects in view, through which I could not penetrate. These objects I then believed were known to General Wilkinson."

At Nashville, he was the guest of General Jackson, "one of those prompt, frank, ardent souls whom I love to meet," said Burr. He staid four days at Nashville. On the 3d of June, in an open boat provided by the general, he and his companion-secretary embarked; and floated down the Cumberland, two hundred and twenty miles, to its mouth, where they found the ark, and resumed their voyage down the Ohio.

Sixteen miles below the mouth of the Cumberland was Fort

Massac, a place of renown in the olden time, long one of the outposts of civilization. There he found General Wilkinson, on his way to his government, and spent four days with him. The subjects of their conferences at this time, Wilkinson says, were perfectly legitimate. Himself, Burr, Dayton, and others, he declares, were deep in the project of making a canal round he rapids of the Ohio, at Louisville; and this was much discussed between them whenever they met. Land speculations were also talked of, and, more than all, the scheme of getting Burr into Congress. Wilkinson gave him letters of introduction to his friends in New Orleans, and, to expedite his voyage, fitted him out "an elegant barge, sails, colors, and ten oars, with a sergeant and ten able, faithful hands."

The eight hundred miles from Fort Massac to Natchez, were accomplished in seven days. "Natchez," he wrote to his daughter, "is a town of three or four hundred houses; the inhabitants traders and mechanics, but surrounded by wealthy planters, among whom I have been entertained with great hospitality and taste. These planters are, many of them, men of education and refinement; live as well as yours, and have generally better houses. We are now going through a settled country, and during the residue of my voyage to New Orleans, about three hundred miles, I shall take breakfast and dinner each day at the house of some gentleman on shore. I take no letters of introduction; but, whenever I hear of any gentleman whose acquaintance or hospitalities I should desire, I send word that I am coming to see him, and have always met a most cordial reception."

June the 25th, sixty-seven days after leaving Philadelphia, the voyager, whose occasional delays had been more than made up by his rapidity when in motion, landed on the levee of New Orleans. He was strongly prepossessed in favor of the place. "I hear so many pleasant things of Orleans," h wrote to his daughter, "that I should certainly (if one half of them are verified on inspection) settle down there, were it not for Theodosia and her boy; *but these will control my fate.*"

The city then contained about nine thousand inhabitants. Three hundred sea-going vessels, and six hundred river flat-

boats arrived annually at its levees. Four forts, one at each angle of the city, half a mile apart, defended the city. Two of these were regularly-constructed fortresses, with fosse, glacis, and drawbridge. The two behind the city were stockades. Since the departure of the Spaniards these fortifications had been partly dismantled, but were capable, in a few weeks, of being restored to their original strength.* In 1805, the

* The following is a description of New Orleans under Spanish rule, from a "Journal of a Tour in Unsettled parts of North America in 1796 and 1797," by the late Francis Baily, F.R.S. It partly explains the hatred of the Spaniards which prevailed in the western country in the early time: "Their houses are generally built of wood, and boarded very plain in the inside, and made very open, that there may be a free circulation of air; consequently they avoid all the inconvenience and expense of paper, carpets, fires, curtains, and hangings of different kinds. The bedrooms are fitted up in the same plain style, and are furnished with nothing but a *hard-stuffed* bed, raised very much in the *middle*, and covered with a clean, white sheet; and over the whole there is a large gauze net (called a *bar*), which is intended as a defense against the mosquitoes, and serves tolerably well to keep off those tormenting creatures. *On* this sheet (spread upon the bed, and *under* the net) you lie down without any other covering, and (if it be summer-time) with the doors and windows open, so intolerable is the heat of the climate. During several days when I was here, the thermometer was at 117° in the shade. The dress of the inhabitants is also correspondent to the furniture of their houses: being clothed in the lightest manner possible, and every one in the manner which pleases him best, there is not (in these new countries) that strange propensity to ridicule every one who deviates from the forms which a more established society may have prescribed to itself; but every one, in this respect, 'doeth that which is right in his own eyes.' Some will wear the short linen jacket of the Americans, others, the long flowing gown, or the cloak of the Spaniards; some, the open trousers and naked collar; others, the more modern dress, of tight pantaloons and large cravats; some, with the white or black chip hat; others, with the beaver and *feathers*, after the manner of the Spaniards: and so in respect to all other minutiæ of dress. * * * There is but one printing press in the place, and that is made use of by the government only. The Spanish government is too jealous to suffer the inhabitants to have the free exercise of it; for, however strange it may appear, yet it is absolutely true that you can not even stick a paper against the wall (either to recover any thing lost, or to advertise any thing for sale) without its first having the signature of the governor, or his secretary attached to it: and on all those little bills which are stuck up at the corners of the streets you see the word 'Permitted' written by the governor or his agent. * * * As to the diversions of the place, they consist principally in billiards, of which

chief defense of the place was a volunteer corps of Americans and Creoles, commanded by Daniel Clark, the great merchant of the city, the founder of that prodigious fortune for which his daughter, Mrs. Gaines, has so long contended in the courts.

Daniel Clark had emigrated from England in 1786, and had grown in wealth with the ever-growing prosperity of the city. He had been ardent for the transfer of the province to the United States, was now the leader of the American party in New Orleans, and seemed to be a zealous friend of the Union. To him Colonel Burr presented the following letter of introduction from General Wilkinson:

"My Dear Sir: This will be delivered to you by Colonel Burr, whose worth you know well how to estimate. If the persecutions of a great and honorable man can give title to generous attentions, he has claims to all your civilities and all your services. You can not oblige me more than by such conduct, and I pledge my life to you it will not be misapplied. To him I refer you for many things improper to letter, and which he will not say to any other. I shall be at St. Louis in two weeks, and if you were there, we could open a mine, a commercial one at least. Let me hear from you. Farewell, do well, and believe me always your friend."

This epistle produced the effect desired. Burr became intimate with Clark, as with all the important persons of the place. He was received everywhere as *the great man!* Governor Claiborne (governor of Orleans Territory) gave him a grand dinner, which was attended by as distinguished a company as New Orleans could assemble. Banquet followed

there are several tables in the town. This practice I presume they have adopted from the Americans, who (in the southern part of that continent) follow this amusement very much. They have a playhouse, which is rather small. It consists of one row of boxes only, with an amphitheater in the middle, which is raised above the pit, and over the whole there is a gallery. The plays are performed in French, and they have a tolerable set of actors. The inhabitants are also musical, but this lies chiefly among the French. The gentlemen of the place often perform in the orchestra of the theater: in fact, there is no other music there but such as they obtain in this voluntary way."

banquet; fête succeeded fête; ball followed ball. The French air that surrounded every thing, the French manner and tone of society, were as pleasing as they were novel to the traveler. The days flew swiftly by. *A la Santé Madame Alston*, was the first toast at nearly every table. Even the Ursuline nuns sent him an address congratulating him upon his arrival; and, upon their receiving his polite reply, an invitation to visit their convent. He went. "The bishop conducted me to the cloister. We conversed, at first, through the grates; but presently I was admitted within, and I passed an hour with them, greatly to my satisfaction. None of that calm monotony which I expected. All was gayety, *wit*, and sprightliness. * * * At parting, I asked them to remember me in their prayers, which they all promised with great promptness and courtesy."

If Burr ever meant to settle at the West, in the practice of the law, it was this banqueting and lionizing, in my opinion, which made it (morally) impossible for him to execute that intention. He should have resolutely declined to appear in the West as a great personage. How could a man of Burr's cast of character, after figuring at the head of cavalcades, after shining at balls and banquets, the observed of all observers, smiled upon by ladies, toasted, cheered, and followed by men — how could he take a little office at Nashville or New Orleans, hang out a little tin sign, and subside into an ordinary attorney and counselor at law? A wise man could. But who is wise? There is no position in human life more embarrassing, or more likely to be corrupting, than that of a man who is compelled to move in the conspicuous and costly spheres without possessing the requisite sum *per annum!* To be a poor man is nothing — is the lot of nearly all the men that live. But a crownless *king*, a penniless prince, an ex-Vice-President, without home, country, employment, income — these are pitiable persons. They are dangerous, too. It is such who plan Boulogne expeditions, usurp thrones, start mad enterprises, and turn the world upside down.

Burr staid three weeks in New Orleans. Wilkinson said in his letter of introduction, that Burr would make communica-

tions to Clark which were "*improper to letter.*" What were they? Burr was not a person to waste three weeks in mere feasting and playing the great man. Wherever he was, whatever he was, he was *busy.* He had the quickest, most active mind that ever animated five feet six inches of mortality. It is certain that he did *something* at New Orleans during those three weeks. What?

The question has been answered, first, by Wilkinson in his ponderous Memoirs; secondly, by Clark in his angry octavo, entitled, "*Proofs of the Corruption of General James Wilkinson, and of his Connection with Aaron Burr;* thirdly, by Matthew L. Davis, speaking for Burr himself. Wilkinson says the reference in his letter of introduction, was simply to the election scheme. Clark declares that Burr confided nothing to him whatever. He says he liked Burr exceedingly, invited him to dinner, showed him every possible civility, but had not a syllable of confidential conversation with him. In the most positive and circumstantial manner, he denies that he had then, or ever had, any participation in, or knowledge of, Burr's designs.* Davis, on the contrary, asserts that Clark and Wilkinson were both ardently engaged with Burr; and that Clark agreed to advance fifty thousand dollars in furtherance of the great project. Other friends of Burr say that

* Clark's own comments on Wilkinson's letter are as follows: "The things which it was improper to *letter* to me are pretty plainly expressed in a communication made about the same time (by Wilkinson) to General Adair. The letter is dated, Rapids of Ohio, May 28th, 1805, 11 o'clock, and contains these expressions: — 'I was to have introduced my friend Burr to you, but in this I failed by accident. He understands your merits, and reckons on you. Repair to me and I will tell you *all.* We must have a peep at the unknown world beyond me.' The letter to me I think fully proves that some secret plan of Burr's was known to Wilkinson in May, 1805. That to General Adair leaves no doubt on the subject. Immediately after this he went to St. Louis, where his very first act, before he had broken bread in the territory, was an endeavor to bring Major Bruff into his plans. He tells him that he had a '*grand scheme,*' that 'would make the fortunes of all concerned;' and though Major Bruff's manner of receiving this overture put a stop to any further disclosure, yet we may judge of its nature, for it was introduced by a philippic against democracy, and the ingratitude of republican governments."

Clark made two voyages to Vera Cruz, to spy out the enemy's country. Clark admits having made the voyages (one in September, 1805, the other in February, 1806); admits having collected information in Mexico respecting the strength of the fortresses, the number of the garrisons, and the disposition of the people; but asserts that his voyages had none but commercial objects, and that his inquiries were only prompted by curiosity. A witness deposed to having heard Clark say, that he would willingly join in a private scheme for the conquest of Mexico, provided the adventurers could turn their backs for ever on the United States. "You, for example, might be a duke," was one expression which the witness swore he had heard Clark use in the course of the same conversation.

The difficulty of arriving at certainty on this subject arises from the fact, that most of the existing evidence was given *after* the explosion! It was amusing, says Burnet (in his "Notes"), to see men who *before* the President's proclamation appeared, had been loudest in Burr's praises, and deepest in his schemes, making haste, *after* that bolt had shivered the project to atoms, to denounce the traitor at every corner, and running to offer their services to the governor in defense of a distracted and imperiled country.

My own *impression*, after reading all the procurable documents, is, that neither Clark nor Wilkinson were really embarked in Burr's Mexican scheme; though both, up to a certain point, may have favored it. Nor do I think that, during this visit to New Orleans, Burr himself did more than collect information, and cast a very wistful eye across the river to the domain of the hated Spaniards, who still held the western bank of the Mississippi. Of all the men in the territory, Clark and Wilkinson were the best informed respecting the affairs of Mexico. Both had traded with the Dons. Wilkinson, for many a year, had indulged the dream of leading an army to the capital of the Montezumas, and had made minute inquiries respecting the routes. All these stores of information were freely poured into the ear of a man fond of adventure, habituated to distinction, and destitute of resources.

He could see for himself that the tie which bound the province of Louisiana to the Union was not strong. The French population, who had for a few months enjoyed a reunion with their mother country, and had hoped that that reunion would be perpetual, merely acquiesced in the recent cession. The Spaniards could not give up the hope of regaining the province.

Sixty years before, the map of what is now the United States, reflected glory chiefly upon the Spanish name. Except that along the Atlantic coast there appeared a narrow red stripe denoting the British colonies, that map was one expanse of green, the northern part of which was called Canada, the southern, Louisiana; and the whole was claimed by the French. A few years later, the latter province, embracing the most productive part of the valley of the Mississippi, and the mouth of the river, upon which the value of all the rest depended, was ceded to Spain. After half a century of possession, the Spaniards had lost all their domain east of this river, but still hoped that the next European peace would give it back to them. Some of the Spanish officials remained in New Orleans for eighteen months after the cession, in expectation of that event.

The American population, composed chiefly of young, adventurous men, had taken some umbrage at the central government, and Burr must have heard expressions of this during his stay.

Toward the close of July, he bade farewell to his friends in New Orleans, promising to return to them ere long. To ascend those great rivers of the south-west was scarcely possible at that day. Daniel Clark furnished him with two horses, and a servant to bring them back, who attended him as far as Natchez. In the gay society of that place, he lingered a week; then, taking a guide, plunged into the dreary wilderness that lay between Natchez and Nashville, a distance of four hundred and fifty miles. The path, where there was a path, was a famous Indian trail, which wound around stagnant lakes, along sluggish streams, and through dismal swamps. At certain seasons, it was infested by robbers who used to lay

in wait for boatmen returning to the Ohio laden with the proceeds of their last voyage to New Orleans. Tired and worn with this miserable journey, performed in the hottest season of the year, the traveler reached Nashville on the 6th of August, and was once more domiciled with General Jackson.

Again, he was overwhelmed with attentions. He was complimented, too, with a public dinner, which was attended by all that Nashville could boast of distinction and talent.

He remained a week at the general's hospitable mansion. A two weeks' tour in Kentucky followed, during which, besides traversing another wilderness of a hundred and fifty miles, he visited Louisville, Frankfort, and Lexington, at all of which he was entertained with fatal distinction. He formed an acquaintance with Henry Clay, then in the dawn of his renown. Clay was strongly attracted to a man whom he, in common with most western men, regarded as the victim of persecution, and whose talents he admired.

It was during this very tour in Kentucky that the antipathy of the men of the West to their Spanish neighbors was kindled to fury by what is known as the "Kemper difficulty." Baton Rouge, though chiefly inhabited by Americans, was still held and garrisoned by Spaniards. The Americans, in the course of that summer, had formed a plot to "shake off the Spanish yoke," and to annex themselves to their countrymen on the other side of the Mississippi. For want of a competent leader, the plot failed, and the Spaniards, with their usual stupidity, were eager, not to conciliate, but to punish the "rebels." The three brothers Kemper, who had been the leading spirits of the rebellion, fled to the American side, where they established themselves. In their own houses, at midnight, they were seized by a party of Spanish troops, and conveyed across the line. They were soon re-captured; but this impudent violation of American soil touched the pride of the border States keenly, and it was while every man was breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the insolent Dons, that Burr was traversing those States. If *then*, he had done what next year he attempted, the issue might have been different — could not but have been different.

Meanwhile, the impression arose that Burr's presence in the West had something to do with these Spanish troubles, and a rumor to that effect soon found its way to the Spanish authorities, who still had prisoners on the American soil. September 7th, we find Daniel Clark writing to General Wilkinson, a letter upon the subject. That epistle has been thought a master-piece of dissembling. The reader may try his penetration upon it:

"Many absurd and wild reports are circulated here, and have reached the ears of the officers of the late Spanish government, respecting our ex-Vice-President. You are spoken of as his right-hand man, and even I am now supposed to be of consequence enough to combine with Generals and Vice-Presidents. At any other time but the present, I should amuse myself vastly at the folly and fears of those who are affected with these idle tales; but being on the point of setting off for Vera Cruz, on a large mercantile speculation, I feel cursedly hurt at the rumors, and might, in consequence of Spanish jealousy, get into a hobble I could not easily get out of. Entre nous, I believe that Minor, of Natchez, has a great part in this business, to make himself of importance. He is in the pay of Spain, and wishes to convince them he is much their friend. This is, however, a matter of suspicion on my part, but the channel through which the information reached me, makes me suppose it. Power, whose head is always stuffed with plots, projects, conspiracies, etc., etc., etc., and who sees objects through a mill-stone, is going to Natchez, next week, to unravel the whole of this extraordinary business, and then God have mercy on the culprits, for Spanish fire and indignation will be leveled at them. What in the name of heaven could have given rise to these extravagances?

"Were I sufficiently intimate with Mr. Burr, and knew where to direct a line to him, I should take the liberty of writing to him. Perhaps, finding Minor in his way, he was endeavoring to extract something from him. He has amused himself at the blockhead's expense, and then Minor has retailed the news to his employers. Inquire of Mr. Burr about this, and let me know at my return, which will be in three or six months. The

tale is a horrid one, if well told. Kentucky, Tennessee, the State of Ohio, and part of Georgia and Carolina, are to be bribed with the plunder of the Spanish countries west of us, to separate from the Union. This is but a part of the business. Heavens! what wonderful things there will be in those days. But how the devil I have been lugged into the conspiracy, or what assistance, I can be to it, is to me incomprehensible Vous, qui savez tout, can best explain this riddle. Amuse Mr Burr with an account of it, but let not these great and important objects, these almost imperial doings, prevent you from attending to my land business. Recollect that you, if you intend to become kings and emperors, must have a little more consideration for vassals; and if we have nothing to clothe ourselves with, for we can be clothed by the produce of our lands only; and if Congress take the land for want of formalities, we shall then have no produce, and shall make a very shabby figure at your courts. Think of this, and practice those formalities that are necessary, that I may have from my Illinois lands wherewith to buy a decent court-dress, when presented at your levee. I hope you will not have Kentucky men for your masters of ceremonies."

To this letter Wilkinson briefly replied; but only alluded to the rumor as "the tale of a tub of Burr," and passed to other subjects.

About the middle of September, Burr reached St. Louis, where General Wilkinson was. What passed between them has been told only by Wilkinson, who says that he was then struck and alarmed by the altered manner of his friend. "Burr seemed," says he, "to be revolving some great project, the nature of which he did not disclose. Speaking of the imbecility of the government, Colonel Burr said, 'it would molder to pieces, die a natural death,' or words to that effect; adding 'that the people of the western country were ready for revolt.' To this I recollect replying, that if he had not profited more by his journey, he had better have remained at Washington or Philadelphia. For surely, said I, my friend, no person was ever more mistaken! The western people dis-

affected to the government? They are bigoted to Jefferson and democracy! and the conversation dropped."

Other conversation of this kind followed, and Wilkinson, according to his own account, began to fear that Burr had conceived some dangerous and desperate enterprise. More than ever, therefore, he bestirred himself to promote his election to Congress. As evidence of this, Wilkinson adduces a letter of his to Governor Harrison of Indiana, dated September 19th. The part of it relating to Burr is as follows; "Shall I say in return I have a boon to ask of you, of no ordinary import? No, I will not! because the commutation would dishonor my application; but I will demand from your friendship a boon, in its influence coëxtensive with the Union; a boon, perhaps, on which that Union may much depend; a boon which may serve me, may serve you, and dis-serve neither; a boon, which from my knowledge of men, motives, and principles, will be acceptable to those whose politics we are bound to support. If you ask, what is this important boon which I so earnestly crave? I will say to you, return the bearer to the councils of our country, where his talents and abilities are all-important at the present moment. But, you continue, how is this to be done? By your fiat! Let Mr. Parke adhere to his profession; convene your Solomons and let them return him (Colonel Burr) to Congress. If you taste this proposition, speak to him, and he will authorize you to purchase, if necessary, an estate for him in your Territory."

Wilkinson says that, besides writing this letter, he warned a member of the cabinet, about the same time, to "keep an eye upon Burr." But he also admits that between September, 1805, and May, 1806, he received six letters in cipher from Colonel Burr, all of which contained expressions calculated to inculpate him (Wilkinson). Specimens of these will be given in a moment.

In October Burr had left the far West. On his way eastward, he called again at Blennerhassett Island, but found the master absent.

In November he passed a week at Washington, when he was received as of old, dined with the President, and gave an

account of his western travels to the company. In the course of conversation, at the President's table, he chanced to mention that a certain military road, which figured on a map prepared by, or for General Wilkinson, had no existence in reality. The next day, fearing that this fact might injure the general in the President's estimation, he made a point of calling at the White House to explain it away. From members of the cabinet, he learned that *there would be no war with Spain.*

From Washington he went South to meet his son-in-law and Theodosia; returning in December to Philadelphia. There he wrote one of his mysterious letters to Wilkinson, of which the following is a copy. The date is December 12th: "About the last of October our cabinet was seriously disposed for war with the Spaniards; but more recent accounts of the increasing and alarming aggressions and annoyances of the British, and some courteous words from the French, have banished every such intention. In case of such warfare, Lee would have been commander-in-chief; truth, I assure you; he must, you know, come from Virginia. The utmost now intended is that sort of marine piracy which we had with the French under the former administration. Burr passed a week at Washington, and has been here ten days. Reception as usual. He had discovered nothing which excites doubts of the confirmation of Wilkinson's appointment. Secretary of Navy apprehended no difficulty. Military establishment will not increase nor diminish. On the subject of a certain speculation, it is not deemed material to write till the whole can be communicated. The circumstance referred to in a letter from Ohio remains in suspense; the auspices, however, are favorable, and it is believed that Wilkinson will give audience to a delegation composed of Adair and Dayton in February. Can 25 * * * be had in your vicinity at some few hours' notification?"

One would certainly suppose that men who corresponded thus were acquainted with each other's plans.

In this same month of December, Burr wrote his first letter to Blennerhassett. It was a very innocent communication,

though the contrary has been asserted. It began with regrets that he had not had the pleasure of meeting Blennerhassett on the island, and inquired where and when they could come together. Its main purport was that Blennerhassett was too much of a man to be satisfied with the common-place delights of rural seclusion. He should aspire to a career in which his powers would be employed. His fortune, already impaired, would gradually dwindle away, and his children be left destitute. The world was wide; he should go forth from his enervating solitude in pursuit of fortune and of honor.

The letter produced precisely the effect intended. Flattered by the notice of a distinguished man, anxious for his decaying fortune, fired with a desire for distinction, Blennerhassett replied that he should be glad to participate in any enterprise in which Colonel Burr might think proper to embark. He admitted, upon his trial, that in making this advance to Colonel Burr, he had in view two objects; namely, the procuring of lands in the South-west, and a military enterprise against the Spaniards. He said that he supposed the administration shared the universal indignation against the Spaniards, and that a war with Spain was impending; in which case Colonel Burr's military talents could not but be called into requisition.

This letter was dated December 21st, 1805, but did not reach Colonel Burr until the middle of February, 1806. At that time his plans were in suspense, and he was in some doubt whether he should be ever able to accomplish them. For two months Blennerhassett's letter lay in his desk unanswered. Meanwhile, he had turned his thoughts in another direction. Once more, he sought the public service.

In Jefferson's Anas, under the date of April 15th, 1806, occurs the narrative of Colonel Burr's second application to the President for an appointment. This narrative is doubtless essentially true, but Jefferson admits that it was written under feelings of resentment. Some of Burr's partisans in New York had been agitating this spring a project for his return to that State, again to play the leading part in its politics. Among other means employed (but not by him), was the revival of Burr's suit against Cheetham for libel; the object

being to procure demonstrative proof that Burr did not, in any manner whatever, intrigue for the presidency in 1801. Some of the depositions taken for this purpose seemed to reflect upon Jefferson, and it was while smarting under one of these, that he penned the following "ana:"

"About a month ago, Colonel Burr called on me, and entered into a conversation, in which he mentioned, that a little before my coming into office, I had written to him a letter, intimating that I had destined him for a high employ, had he not been placed by the people in a different one; that he had signified his willingness to resign as Vice-President, to give aid to the administration in any other place; that he had never asked an office, however; he asked aid of nobody, but could walk on his own legs, and take care of himself; that I had always used him with politeness, but nothing more; that he aided in bringing on the present order of things; that he had supported the administration; and that he could do me much harm. He wished, however, to be on different ground. He was now disengaged from all particular business — willing to engage in something — should be in town some days, if I should have any thing to propose to him.

"I observed to him that I had always been sensible that he possessed talents which might be employed greatly to the advantage of the public, and that, as to myself, I had a confidence, that if he were employed, he would use his talents for the public good; but that he must be sensible the public had withdrawn their confidence from him, and that in a government like ours it was necessary to embrace in its administration as great a mass of public confidence as possible, by employing those who had a character with the public of their own, and not merely a secondary one through the executive.

"He observed that if we believed a few newspapers, it might be supposed he had lost the public confidence, but that I knew how easy it was to engage newspapers in any thing.

"I observed that I did not refer to that kind of evidence of his having lost the public confidence, but to the late presidential election, when, though in possession of the office of Vice-President, there was not a single voice heard for his re-

taining it. That, as to any harm he could do me, I knew no cause why he should desire it, but at the same time, I feared no injury which any man could do me; that I never had done a single act, or been concerned in any transaction, which I feared to have fully laid open, or which could do me any hurt, if truly stated; that I had never done a single thing with a view to my personal interest, or that of any friend, or with any other view than that of the greatest public good; that, therefore, no threat or fear on that head would ever be a motive of action with me.

"He has continued in town to this time; dined with me this day week, and called on me to take leave two or three days ago.

"I did not commit these things to writing at the time, but I do it now, because in a suit between him and Cheetham, he has had a deposition of Mr. Bayard taken, which seems to have no relation to the suit, nor to any other object, except to calumniate me."

It is not surprising that Burr's friends should still resent this "ana." Doubtless, the mode of Burr's application is not as favorably stated as it would have been by Colonel Swartwout. But I beg to say that Jefferson's reply was unanswerable and noble, worthy of the best and ablest American then living. Burr was right, too, in laughing it to scorn. He was himself deceived as to his position and popularity by the enthusiasm of his reception at the West. But the West was not then, is not yet, though it is going to be, the Nation. Virginia, New England, Pennsylvania, and New York were the Nation in 1804, and in them it could with truth be said that Colonel Burr had lost the public confidence as a politician, and much of the public respect as a man.

From the time of this interview, Colonel Burr set his face westward, resolved, if possible, to execute the enterprise to which his recent correspondence had so often alluded. On the very day that Jefferson wrote the narrative just quoted, Burr replied to Blennerhassett's letter. He said he *had* projected, and still meditated, a "speculation" precisely of the character Blennerhassett had described. "It would have been

submitted to your consideration, in October last, if I had then had the good fortune to find you at home. The business, however, in some degree depends on contingencies not within my control, and will not be commenced before December, if ever. From this circumstance, and as the matter in its present state can not be satisfactorily explained by letter, the communication will be deferred till a personal interview can be had. With this view, I pray to be informed of your intended movements the ensuing season, and in case you should visit New Orleans, at what time and at what port you may be expected on the Atlantic coast. But I must insist that these intimations be not permitted to interrupt the prosecution of any plans which you have formed for yourself. No occupation which will not take you off the continent can interfere with that which I may propose. * * * We shall have no war unless we should be actually invaded."

The "contingencies" referred to in this letter were chiefly pecuniary. All depended on the possibility of his raising a considerable sum in cash, and a larger one in paper.

The day after answering Blennerhassett, he wrote another letter in cipher to General Wilkinson, of which the following is a copy:

"The execution of our project is postponed till December. Want of water in Ohio rendered movement impracticable: other reasons rendered delay expedient. The association is enlarged, and comprises all that Wilkinson could wish. Confidence limited to a few. Though this delay is irksome, it will enable us to move with more certainty and dignity. Burr will be throughout the United States this summer. Administration is damned, which Randolph aids. Burr wrote you a long let ter last December, replying to a short one deemed very silly. Nothing has been heard from the Brigadier since October. Is Cusion et Portes right? Address, Burr, at Washington"

The "Brigadier" was Wilkinson. "Cusion," was Colonel Cushing, second in command under Wilkinson. "Portes" was Major Porter, another of the brigadier's officers.

This letter confirms the impression, that "our project," whatever it was, was one in which Wilkinson was as much

implicated as Burr. But of all things in the world, circumstantial evidence is the most deceptive. That Wilkinson *knew* what Burr proposed, I can not doubt ; but that he had unequivocally engaged to join in the projected speculation, is a question upon which there may be two well-sustained opinions.

As the spring advanced, affairs in the South-west looked more and more threatening. The Spaniards added aggression to insolence. It had been agreed between the two governments, that until the boundary line should be settled by negotiation, each party should retain its posts, but establish no new ones, nor make any military movements whatever within the limits in dispute. But after making several petty encroachments, the Spanish commander, early in June, advanced a force of twelve hundred men to within twenty miles of Nachitoches. Instantly, General Wilkinson took measures for the defense of the frontier. He had only six hundred regulars under his command, most of whom were hurried forward to the scene of expected warfare. The forts of New Orleans were hastily repaired. Every militiaman in the West was furbishing his accoutrements, and awaiting the summons to the field. On the 4th of July, 1806, there were not a thousand persons in the United States who did not think war with Spain inevitable, impending, begun! The country desired it. A blow from Wilkinson, a word from Jefferson, would have let loose the dogs of war, given us Texas, and changed the history of the two continents.

But Napoleon, now stalking toward the summit of his power, had intimated that a declaration of war against Spain would be considered a declaration of war against *him*. Pitt, his great enemy, had just died. For the moment, Napoelon's word was law everywhere in the world, out of the range of British cannon.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE EXPEDITION.

The Objects of the Expedition — Burr's Confederates — Swartwout Dispatched to Wilkinson — Burr's Fatal Visit to the Morgans — Exercises a Regiment at Marietta — Vigorous Preparations — Rumors — Burr before the Court in Frankfort — Defended by Henry Clay — His Triumphant Acquittal.

Precisely when, precisely where, it was that Burr conceived the enterprise upon which his heart was now fixed, he could not perhaps himself have told. From an early day, schemes for revolutionizing the ill governed Spanish provinces of America, had been familiar to the people of the United States. During the Revolution, General Miranda was much in the American camp, firing the young officers, Hamilton particularly, with his own enthusiasm on this subject; and Burr must often have heard Miranda's plans talked over by the camp-fire. In this very year, 1806, Miranda sailed from New York to Venezuela, with an expedition, to realize the dream of his youth — to execute the purpose of his life. He failed; and failed again; and perished at last in a Spanish dungeon. It was to this expedition that Wilkinson alluded, when he said to Burr at St. Louis, that he feared *Miranda had taken the bread out of his mouth.* Burr used to say, that *Wilkinson* suggested the plan of his expedition — not Miranda.

It was no dream of republicanizing an oppressed people that prompted Burr's enterprise. He had had enough of republics. His design was to conquer Mexico from the Spaniards; to establish in that fine country, a strong, liberal, enlightened government; to place himself at the head of that government; and, if fortune favored, to extirpate the Spanish power on the continent. That done, it would be for the States west of the Alleghanies, in the exercise of their right as independ

ent powers, to decide whether they would remain in the Union, or join the new empire. If they should choose the latter, Burr might select New Orleans for his capital, and rule from thence the whole of the vast valley of the Mississippi. If they should prefer the former, the city of Mexico would be the center and seat of his power. But these details were merely dreamed of. The conquest of Mexico, the deliverance of her people from an exacting and tyrannical government, the establishment of a dynasty worthy to rule so magnificent an empire, the formation of a court, which Theodosia should adorn by her beauty, and enliven by her talents, and where her boy should figure as the heir-apparent — these were the great objects of Burr's thoughts and endeavors during the year 1806.

Whether the execution of the project should be attempted soon, or late, or never, depended upon the turn which affairs might take on the south-western frontier. If war broke out, nothing would be easier than to organize an expedition against Mexico. Thousands of adventurous spirits would hasten to enroll themselves under the banner of a popular chief, and the people of Mexico* were known to be disaffected. Burr had received assurances that the priests would be passive if the church and its possessions were held inviolate. From certain commanders of Spanish militia, he had obtained

* One of Jefferson's letters to John Jay, dated Marseilles, May 1787, contains some interesting information respecting the inhabitants of Mexico at about the period of the American Revolution, derived from a Mexican whom Mr. Jefferson met in Paris. The following is an extract: "He (the Mexican) classes and characterizes the inhabitants of the country as follows: 1. The natives of old Spain, possessed of most of the offices of the government, and firmly attached to it. 2. The clergy, equally attached to the government. 3. The natives of Mexico, generally disposed to revolt, but without instruction, without energy, and much under the dominion of their priests. 4. The slaves, mulatto and black; the former enterprising and intelligent, the latter brave, and of very important weight into whatever scale they throw themselves; but he thinks they would side with their masters. 5. The conquered Indians, cowardly, not likely to take any side, nor important which they take. 6. The free Indians, brave and formidable, should they interfere, but not likely to do so, as being at a great distance."

promises that the moment he should appear in Texas with a respectable body of troops, they would order out their forces and join him *en masse*. Could there but be a beginning of war made, or even a plausible show of it, he saw his way clear to the halls of the Montezumas — to the throne of the Montezumas!

But there might be no war, or it might be long delayed.

To provide for both these contingencies, a large purchase of land was contemplated, far to the south-west, beyond the Mississippi, on the banks of the river Washita, a branch of the Red river. There the choice spirits of the expedition would have, at least, a rendezvous and a refuge. There the chief could, if necessary, fortify and maintain a position. There, if the grand scheme should fail or be abandoned, he would found a colony composed of persons of wealth, education, refinement and talent, who would embark capital in the most productive region of the South-west, and form the most brilliant, accomplished, and enlightened society on the continent. In July, 1806, this purchase was made. It comprised four hundred thousand acres, for which Burr was to pay forty thousand dollars, the first installment of which, five thousand dollars, he did actually pay. In this purchase, several persons participated, most of whom were near relatives or connections of Burr. One of his relatives in Connecticut, a descendant of Jonathan Edwards, advanced a great part of his savings for this purchase. Mr. Alston, probably, furnished money; it is certain he endorsed paper for his father-in-law. Burr's connections in New York were not backward in aiding him. From one source and another, a sum was raised which, as I conjecture, did not exceed forty thousand dollars, though more was to be forthcoming, when needed.

Who were his confederates? Before all others, his daughter, who was devoted to the scheme heart and soul. To achieve a career, and a residence, which she, her husband, and her boy could share, were the darling objects with which Burr had gone forth to seek a new country. She caught eagerly at his proposal. She saw in it the means whereby her father could win a glorious compensation for the wrongs she

felt he had endured, and obtain a conspicuous triumph over all his enemies. Her husband, whose mind Burr had aided to form, and who tenderly loved Theodosia, entered into the enterprise with energy. In New York, it found adherents among the young ambitious men who had surrounded him in the days of his glory. The Swartwouts were in it. Marinus Willet, who was afterward Mayor of New York. was one of its promoters. A score or two of other New Yorkers were involved, in a greater or less degree. Doctor Erich Bollman, a German, who had distinguished himself by a gallant attempt to rescue Lafayette from prison, was one of Burr's most trusted confederates. Dayton was another. Colonel Dupiester was one of the leading spirits. General Jackson, a thorough-going hater of Spaniards, was enthusiastic in the cause. General Adair, of Kentucky, deep in Burr's confidence, approved his plans heartily, but was not personally engaged in them. Blennerhassett was completely captivated by an enterprise which was to enrich him and his children without his being subjected to disagreeable exertion. Upon his island the first rendezvous was to be made. Mrs. Blennerhassett, no less ardent, was preparing to entertain the chief and his daughter at her fantastic mansion; for it was settled that Theodosia should accompany her father, and that both she and Mrs. Blennerhassett should go with the expedition as far as Natchez or New Orleans; there to await the issue. Alston was to follow in a few weeks. Probably, five hundred persons in all, knew something of Burr's plans, and had entered into some kind of engagement to follow his fortunes. There were, also, four or five thousand whose names were on Burr's lists, and who, he thought, would hasten to his standard, as soon he should obtain a foothold on Spanish soil.

During the first half of the year 1806 Burr resided at Philadelphia, in a style and situation more obscure than was formerly his custom. He sought the society of men who had had cause to be dissatisfied with the government, such as Commodore Truxton, who had been struck from the navy list, and General Eaton, who could not get his claim against the government paid. To these men, as to others, he spoke in

contemptuous terms of the administration; he said a separation of the western States must come, sooner or later; he unfolded his own plans, and urged them to unite their fortunes with his. Mr. Davis says that Burr had repeated conferences with Mr. Merry, the British minister at Washington, who communicated the project to his government, and that Colonel Charles Williamson, a well-connected Scotchman, went to England to promote the business. "From the encouragement which he received," adds Mr. Davis, "it was hoped and believed that a British naval squadron would have been furnished in aid of the expedition. The Catholic bishop of New Orleans," he adds, "was also consulted, and prepared to promote the enterprise. He designated three priests of the order of Jesuits as suitable agents, and they were accordingly employed. * * * The superior of the convent of Ursuline nuns, at New Orleans, was in the secret. Some of the sisterhood were also employed in Mexico."

There is a vagueness about these statements which looks intentional, and lessens their credibility. The following is more positive: "At this juncture (January 6, 1806), Mr. Pitt died. Wilkinson must have heard of the death of the premier late in the spring of 1806. From that moment, in Mr. Burr's opinion, Wilkinson became alarmed, and resolved on an abandonment of the enterprise, at the sacrifice of his associates." It may have been the news of Pitt's death, then, that produced the temporary suspension of the scheme, during which Burr applied to the President for employment.

Omitting conjectures on points which the issue rendered of no importance, nothing remains but to narrate the events of the latter half of 1806, as they occurred. Never was an adventurer more sanguine of success than Burr was in July and August of that year. The plot seemed well laid. The excellence of it was that *both his schemes were genuine.* He really *had* two strings to his bow. If war broke out, he would march into Mexico; if not, he would settle on the Washita; and wait for a better opportunity. In either case, he was going westward never to return. In either case, a career opened

up before him which he believed in, and could have been satisfied with.

At the end of July, his preparations at the East being complete, his first movement was to send forward Samuel Swartwout, with a packet of letters and communications, in cipher, to General Wilkinson, for the purpose, as he said, of securing concert of action between them. On the 29th of July, Swartwout, accompanied by another adventurer, young Ogden, a son of Matthew Ogden, of New Jersey, set out on his long journey to the lower Mississippi.

Six days after, Burr and his daughter, with two or three friends, and a servant or two, followed, taking what they supposed to be their last farewell of the eastern world. As they floated down the Ohio, Burr would occasionally make detours into the adjacent country for the purpose of procuring recruits, and feeling the western pulse. It so chanced, that one of the first, if not the first, visit of this kind, had consequences of the utmost importance.

It was to the house of Colonel Morgan, a name of renown in the West, a valiant old campaigner, who lived, with two stalwart sons, near Cannonsburg, Ohio, that this fatal visit was made. Civilities had passed between Morgan and Burr in former years, and the old patriot had conceived for Burr a very warm friendship, which his misfortunes and "persecutions" had strengthened. As his custom was, Colonel Burr gave notice of his coming, and the old gentleman, bursting with hospitality, sent forth his two sons to meet the expected guests. Colonel Burr rode with one of the sons, and Colonel Dupiester with the other. Burr's conversation surprised the young gentleman. Among other things, he said the Union could not last long; a separation of the States must ensue, as a natural consequence, in four or five years. He made minute inquiries respecting the militia and arms of the country, and the character of the officers. One of Morgan's workmen, a fine stout fellow, chanced to pass, and Burr said he wished he had ten thousand such.

After dinner, in the presence of a considerable company Burr talked in a strain that shocked and puzzled these good

people still more. "I spoke," deposed Colonel Morgan, "of our fine country, I observed that, when I first went west, there was not a single family between the Alleghany mountains and the Ohio ; and that, by and by, we should have Congress sitting in this neighborhood or Pittsburg."

"No, never," said Colonel Burr, "for in less than five years you will be totally divided from the Atlantic States."

"God forbid!" exclaimed the old gentleman ; "I hope no such thing will ever happen, at least not in my time."

The conversation then turned to Burr's favorite topic of the imbecility of the Federal government. The narrative of Colonel Morgan continues thus :

"Colonel Burr said, that with two hundred men he could drive Congress, with the President at its head, into the river Potomac ; or that it might be done ; and he said with five hundred men, he could take possession of New York. He appealed to Colonel Dupiester, if it could not be done : he nodded assent. There was a reply made to this by one of my sons, that he would be damned if they could take our little town of Cannonsburg with that force. Some short time after this, Colonel Burr went out from the dining-room to the passage, and beckoned to my son Thomas. What their conversation was, I can not say. Soon after, a walk was proposed to my son's mill, and the company went out. When they returned, one (or both of my sons) came to caution me, and said, 'You may depend upon it, Colonel Burr will this night open himself to you. He wants Tom to go with him.' After the usual conversation, Colonel Burr went up stairs, and, as I thought, to go to bed. Mrs. Morgan was reading to me (as is usual, when the family have retired), when, about eleven o'clock, and after I had supposed he had been an hour in bed, she told me that Colonel Burr was coming down, and as she had heard my son's conversation, she added, 'You'll have it now.' Colonel Burr came down with a candle in his hand. Mrs. Morgan immediately retired. The colonel took his seat by me. He drew from his pocket a book. I suppose it was a memorandum-book. After looking at it, he asked me if I knew a Mr Vigo, of Fort Vincent, a Spaniard. I replied, yes ; I knew

him; I had reasons to know him. One was, that I had reasons to believe that he was deeply involved in the British conspiracy in 1788, as I supposed; the object of which was to separate the States; and which General Neville and myself had suppressed. I called it a nefarious thing to aim at the division of the States. I was careful to put great emphasis on the word '*nefarious*.' Colonel Burr, finding what kind of man he had to deal with, suddenly stopped, thrust into his pocket the book which I saw had blank leaves in it, and retired to bed. I believe I was pretty well understood. The next morning Colonel Burr and Colonel Dupiester went off before breakfast, without my expecting it."

In short, Colonel Burr, on this occasion as on others, comported himself precisely as a man having "treasonable" designs would *not* comport himself, unless he were mad or intoxicated.

Not so thought Colonel Morgan. He thought there was danger in what he had heard. There was a court sitting in the neighborhood; he invited two of the judges to dinner, to whom he detailed all that Burr had said and done. These gentlemen wrote a joint letter to the President, giving him the same information, and advising that Burr's future movements be watched. Jefferson expressly says that this letter gave him the first intimation of Burr's designs. He acted upon the judges' suggestion by forwarding information to confidential persons in the western country, and, soon after, by detaching a government clerk, named Graham, with orders to go in pursuit of Burr, and ascertain, if possible, what his plans were. But in those days operations of this kind were slow. It was not until nearly the end of September that the judges' letter reached Washington; and two months, therefore, passed before Burr began to experience the results of his indiscretion; during which his affairs went on without interruption. In these days, a telegraphic dispatch would have finished the business in two hours.

Marietta was Burr's next halting-place. It happened that he arrived there on the day of a general training of the militia. Riding to the field, he exercised a regiment in a few

evolutions, and, by his prompt, energetic manner, gave the multitude a high idea of his military talents. In the evening, he and Theodosia attended a ball, where he completed the conquest of Marietta by the courtly grace of his manners The belief was general that he was engaged in an expedition of some kind. The belief was equally general, that that expedition was sanctioned, or would be sanctioned, by the government, and he was at no loss for recruits in Marietta.

How far Burr guiltily inculcated the falsehood, that his ulterior designs were known and approved by the President, is still somewhat uncertain. Davis, who knew him intimately for forty years, says he never knew him to tell a *direct lie ;* and other friends of Burr have given me the same information. But Davis admits, that "by innuendoes or otherwise, Burr induced some to believe that his arrangements for the invasion of Mexico were with the knowledge, if not the approbation of the government." Strange perversion of morals, which could deem an indirect, or acted, falsehood, less unworthy of a gentleman than a bold and downright lie!

Mr. Jefferson, who, with all his admirable qualities, must be pronounced a credulous man, and who certainly burned and strove for Burr's conviction to a degree extraordinary and unaccountable, sent the following to the prosecuting attorney during the trial at Richmond: "It is *understood* that whenever Burr met with subjects who did not choose to embark in his projects, unless approved by their government, he asserted that he had that approbation. Most of them took his word for it, but it is said that with those who would not, the following stratagem was practiced. A forged letter, purporting to be from General Dearborne (Secretary of War), was made to express his approbation, and to say that I was absent at Monticello, but that there was no doubt that on my return, my approbation of his enterprise would be given. This letter was spread open on his table, so as to invite the eye of whoever entered his room, and he contrived occasions of sending up into his room those whom he wished to become witnesses of his acting under sanction. By this means he avoided committing himself to any liability to prosecution for forgery,

and gave another proof of being a great man in little things, while he is really small in great ones. I must add General Dearborne's declaration, that he never wrote a letter to Burr in his life, except that when here, once in a winter he usually wrote him a billet of invitation to dine."

How much truth there may be in this, I can not tell. Something resembling such a trick may have been resorted to once, and for some special purpose — but *not* for the purpose of overcoming the conscientious scruples of patriots. Patriots of conscientious scruples never read letters which they find lying open in the apartments of others. Nevertheless, Jefferson's main charge is undeniably true, namely, that the idea, in *some* way, was given out, that the government secretly approved of what Burr was doing. Burr would reply to this, that his plans were based on the certainty of war; and in time of war, private expeditions, designed to injure the enemy, can not *but* be approved by government.

Leaving his daughter upon Blennerhassett Island, Burr bent all his powers to preparing for the expedition. Contracts for fifteen large batteaux, to be capable of transporting five hundred men, were entered into at Marietta, and the work forthwith began. Quantities of flour, pork, and meal were purchased. On the island kilns were constructed for drying the corn. Men were daily added to the rolls. They appear to have been engaged for an object which was to be explained to them afterward, but all were to come equipped and armed, and to each was promised, as part of the compensation for his services, one hundred acres of land on the Washita. Blennerhassett was busy enough. To prepare the western mind for future contingencies, he wrote a series of articles in a neighboring newspaper, in which the advantages of a separation of the western States from the eastern were discussed and exhibited. His island resounded with the din of preparation. Mrs. Blennerhassett, happy in the society of Theodosia, full of confidence in her father's talents, was all a-glow with pleasant expectation. Burr was everywhere; now at Marietta; now at Chillicothe; then at Cincinnati; through Kentucky and Tennessee; everywhere gaining adherents, and enlarging his

acquaintance with men of influence; received always as the great man. Six boats were set building on the Cumberland, and four thousand dollars deposited with General Jackson to pay for them. In October, Mr. Alston arrived, and soon after, he, Theodosia, and Blennerhassett, journeyed, by easy stages, to Lexington, in Kentucky, leaving the energetic wife of Blennerhassett upon the island, to superintend the great concerns there going forward. On their journey they found the country full of rumors respecting Burr, and some scheme he was said to have in hand; but they also observed that these rumors were generally believed to be groundless; and attributed to the malice of Burr's old enemies, the Federalists.

Before long, the press began, in a confused and doubtful tone, to sound the alarm. In the *Western World*, a newspaper published at Frankfort, Kentucky, there appeared some articles, in which, along with many errors, Burr's scheme was shadowed forth, and he himself denounced as a traitor. The writer descanted on the disunion party of 1796, re-stated its plan of disunion, denounced anew the surviving members of that party, some of whom were in high place, and asserted that a gigantic conspiracy had been formed to revive and carry out the plan. All this, he avowed, was done through Spanish agents, who kept in pay some of the leading men of Kentucky. This farrago of truth and falsehood, though it convinced few, yet added fuel to the flame of popular excitement.

On the 3d of November, at Frankfort, Mr. Daviess, Attorney for the United States, rose in court, and moved that Aaron Burr be compelled to attend the court, to answer a charge to be made against him, of being engaged in an enterprise contrary to the laws of the United States, and designed to injure a power with which the United States were at peace. This movement took every one by surprise. Daviess was a noted Federalist, and the motion was at once concluded to be a mere manifestation of party spite. As the news flew about the town, nine tenths of the people, it is said, sided instantly with Burr, and indignantly denounced the attorney. Judge Innis evidently sympathized with the popular feeling, and,

after deliberating on the motion for two days, denied it. The interesting scenes which followed this decision at Frankfort, are spiritedly related by an eye-witness, or from information given by eye witnesses, in Collins's History of Kentucky.

"Colonel Burr was in Lexington at the time, and was informed of the motion made by Daviess in an incredibly short space of time after it was made. He entered the court-house shortly after Innis had overruled the motion, and addressed the judge with a grave and calm dignity of manner which increased, if possible, the general prepossession in his favor. He spoke of the late motion as one which had greatly surprised him; insinuated that Daviess had reason to believe that he was absent upon business of a private and pressing nature, which, it was well known, required his immediate attention; that the judge had treated the application as it deserved; but as it might be renewed by the attorney, in his absence, he preferred that the judge should entertain the motion *now*, and he had voluntarily appeared in order to give the gentleman an opportunity of proving his charge.

"Nowise disconcerted by the lofty tranquillity of Burr's manner, than which nothing could be more imposing, Daviess promptly accepted the challenge, and declared himself ready to proceed as soon as he could procure the attendance of his witnesses. After consulting with the marshal, Daviess announced his opinion that his witnesses could attend on the ensuing Wednesday; and, with the concurrence of Burr, that day was fixed upon by the court for the investigation.

"Burr awaited the day with an easy tranquillity which seemed to fear no danger, and on Wednesday the court-house was crowded to suffocation. Daviess, upon counting his witnesses, discovered that Davis Floyd, one of the most important, was absent, and, with great reluctance, asked a postponement of the case. The judge instantly discharged the grand jury. Colonel Burr then appeared at the bar, accompanied by his counsel, Henry Clay and Colonel Allen. Colonel Burr arose in court, expressed his regret that the grand jury had been discharged, and inquired the reason. Colonel Daviess replied, and added, that Floyd was then in Indiana, attending

a session of the territorial legislature. Burr calmly desired that the cause of the postponement might be entered upon the record, as well as the reason why Floyd did not attend. He then, with great self-possession, and with an air of candor difficult to be resisted, addressed the court and crowded audience upon the subject of the accusation. His style was without ornament, passion, or fervor; but the spell of a great mind, and daring, but calm spirit was felt with singular power by all who heard him. He hoped the good people of Kentucky would dismiss their apprehensions of danger from him, if any such really existed. There was really no ground for them, however zealously the attorney might strive to awaken them. He was engaged in no project inimical to the peace or tranquillity of the country; as they would certainly learn whenever the attorney should be ready, which he greatly apprehended would never be. In the mean time, although private business urgently demanded his presence elsewhere, he felt compelled to give the attorney one more opportunity of proving his charge, and would patiently await another attack.

"Upon the 25th of November, Colonel Daviess informed the court that Floyd would attend on the 2d of December following, and another grand jury was summoned to attend on that day. Colonel Burr came into court attended by the same counsel as on the former occasion, and coolly awaited the expected attack. Daviess, with evident chagrin, again announced that he was not ready to proceed; that John Adair had been summoned, and was not in attendance, and that his testimony was indispensable to the prosecution. He again asked a postponement of the case for a few days, and that the grand jury should be kept impanneled until he could compel the attendance of Adair by attachment.

"Burr, upon the present occasion, remained silent, and entirely unmoved by any thing that occurred. Not so his counsel. A most animated and impassioned debate sprung up, intermingled with sharp and flashing personalities, between Clay and Daviess. Never did two more illustrious orators encounter each other in debate. The enormous mass which crowded to suffocation the floor, the galleries, the windows, the plat

form of the judge, remained still and breathless for hours, while these renowned and immortal champions, stimulated by mutual rivalry, and each glowing in the ardent conviction of right, encountered each other in splendid intellectual combat. Clay had the sympathies of the audience on his side, and was the leader of the popular party in Kentucky. Daviess was a Federalist, and was regarded as persecuting an innocent and unfortunate man from motives of political hate. But he was buoyed up by the full conviction of Burr's guilt, and the delusion of the people on the subject; and the very infatuation which he beheld around him, and the smiling serenity of the traitor who sat before him, stirred his great spirit to one of his most brilliant efforts. All, however, was in vain. Judge Innis refused to retain the grand jury, unless some business was brought before them; and Daviess, in order to gain time sent up to them an indictment against John Adair, which was pronounced by the jury 'not a true bill.' The hour being late, Daviess then moved for an attachment to compel the presence of Adair, which was resisted by Burr's counsel, and refused by the court, on the ground that Adair was not in contempt till the day had expired. On the motion of Daviess, the court then adjourned to the following day.

"In the interval, Daviess had a private interview with the judge, and obtained from him an expression of the opinion that it would be allowable for him as prosecutor to attend the grand jury in their room, and examine the witnesses, in order to explain to them the connection of the detached particles of evidence which his intimate acquaintance with the plot would enable him to do, and without which the grand jury would scarcely be able to comprehend their bearing. When the court resumed its sitting on the following morning, Daviess moved to be permitted to attend the grand jury in their room. This was resisted by Burr's counsel as novel and unprecedented, and refused by the court. The grand jury then retired, witnesses were sworn and sent up to them, and on the 5th of the month, they returned, as Daviess had expected, 'not a true bill.' In addition to this, the grand jury returned into court a written declaration, signed by the whole of them, in

wnich, from all the evidence before them, they completely exonerated Burr from any design inimical to the peace or well-being of the country. Colonel Allen instantly moved the court that a copy of the report of the grand jury should be aken and inserted in the newspapers, which was granted. The popular current ran with great strength in his favor, and the United States' attorney, for the time, was overwhelmed with obloquy.

"The acquittal of Burr was celebrated at Frankfort by a brilliant ball, numerously attended; which was followed by another ball given in honor of the baffled attorney, by those friends who believed the charge to be just, and that truth, for the time, had been baffled by boldness, eloquence, and delusion. At one of these parties the editor of the *Western World*, who had boldly sounded the alarm, was violently attacked, with a view of driving him from the ball-room, and was rescued with difficulty.

"Before Mr. Clay took any active part as the counsel of Burr, he required of him an explicit disavowal, upon his honor, that he was engaged in no design contrary to the laws and peace of the country. The pledge was promptly given by Burr in language the most comprehensive and particular. 'He had no design,' he said, 'to intermeddle with or disturb the tranquillity of the United States, nor its territories, nor any part of them. He had neither issued, nor signed, nor promised a commission to any person for any purpose. He did not own a single musket, nor bayonet, nor any single article of military stores, nor did any other person for him, by his authority or knowledge. His views had been explained to several distinguished members of the administration, were well understood and approved by the government. They were such as every man of honor, and every good citizen must approve.'"

Mr. Clay, there is reason to believe, went to his grave in the belief that each of these assertions was an unmitigated falsehood, and the writer of the above adduces them merely as remarkable instances of cool, impudent lying. On the contrary, with one exception, all of Burr's allegations were true; and even that one was true in a *Burrian* sense. He did *not*

own any arms or military stores. By the terms of his engagement with his recruits, every man was to join him armed, just as every backwoodsman was armed whenever he went from home. He had *not* issued nor promised any commissions; the time had not yet come for that. Jefferson and his cabinet undoubtedly knew his views and intentions up to the point where they ceased to be lawful! That is to say, they knew that he was going to settle in the western country, and that if the expected war should break out, he would head an onslaught on the Dons. His *ulterior* views may have been known to one, or even two, members of Jefferson's cabinet, for any thing that can *now* be ascertained. The moment the tide really turned against this fated man, a surprising ignorance overspread many minds that had before been extremely well-informed respecting his plans.

To several other persons, Burr held similar language about this time. He told John Smith of Ohio, that if Bonaparte with all his army were in the western country, with the objects attributed to himself, he would never see salt water again. November 27th, he wrote to Governor Harrison: "Considering the various and extravagant reports which circulate concerning me, it may not be unsatisfactory to you to be informed (and to you there can be no better source of information than myself) that I have no wish or design to attempt a separation of the Union, that I have no connection with any foreign power or government, that I never meditated the introduction of any foreign power or influence into the United States, or any part of its territories, but on the contrary should repel with indignation any proposition or measure having that tendency; in fine, that I have no project or views hostile to the interest or tranquillity or union of the United States, or prejudicial to its government, and I pledge my honor to the truth of this declaration. It is true that I am engaged in an extensive speculation, and that with me are associated some of your intimate and dearest friends. The objects are such as every man of honor and every good citizen must approve. They have been communicated to several of the principal officers of our government, particularly to one

in the confidence of the administration. He has assured me my views would be grateful to the administration. Indeed, from the nature of them, it can not be otherwise, and I have no doubt of having received your active support, if a personal communication with you could have been had."

After his acquittal at Frankfort, Burr proceeded, with flying colors, to Nashville, where he was again received as a conquering hero, and where another grand ball celebrated his deliverance from "Federal machinations." He addressed himself to the task of completing his preparations, fondly supposing that now every obstacle was removed. The plan was, for Blennerhassett and his party to float down the Ohio, in the fifteen batteaux that were building at Marietta; and for himself and the Tennesseeans to descend the Cumberland. At the mouth of the Cumberland the parties were to unite, Burr to take the command, and the whole flotilla to proceed down the Mississippi in quest of what fortune might have in store for them.

But alas! never was a fly more completely entangled in a spider's web than was this adventurer in the meshes of his own plot, at the moment when every body was congratulating him on his triumph, and when he saw the path to fortune and glory clear and bright before him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE EXPLOSION.

Swartwout's Arrival in General Wilkinson's Camp — The Cipher Letters — Wilkinson Reveals the Scheme — Sends Information to the President — The Proclamation — Wilkinson's Measures — The Public Frenzy — Scenes on Blennerhassett Island — Descent of the River — Burr Surrenders — Grand Jury Refuse to Indict Him — His Flight into the Wilderness.

The summer of 1806 was a busy one indeed with General Wilkinson. What with fortifying New Orleans, transporting troops to the Sabine, calling out the militia, preparing them for the field, and writing long dispatches to the Secretary of War, the portly general had had his hands full. He had never before been so important a personage. Beside being the governor of a Territory, he was the commander-in-chief of the army; and the critical relations subsisting between Spain and the United States fixed upon him, for the time, the eyes of two nations. It was this — not Pitt's death — which made him a traitor to Burr, if he was a traitor to Burr.

Toward the close of September, he repaired in person to the neighborhood of the Sabine, where, for several weeks, a body of his troops had been confronting the Spanish camp. Every thing wore a more warlike aspect than ever, and the American soldiers were impatient to be led against the enemy. Wilkinson himself expected battle, so he said; was expecting it daily; when an event occurred which totally and instantly changed the current of his plans. This was the arrival in camp of Samuel Swartwout.

If Wilkinson's account be true, the very means which Burr adopted to precipitate war, was the direct and only cause of its prevention.

Misled by false information respecting the general's movements, Swartwout and his companion had been traveling for

nine weeks, with all the rapidity possible in the year before Fulton went to Albany in his steamboat. Leaving Ogden to continue his journey to New Orleans, Swartwout, on the 8th of October, came in sight of Wilkinson's quarters at Nachitoches, and inquired for Colonel Cushing, the second in command. He was conducted to the quarters of that officer, which were, indeed, at head-quarters. To him he presented a letter from Dayton, which introduced Ogden to Cushing's acquaintance, but mentioned Swartwout as Ogden's traveling companion. What followed the reading of this letter has been related by Colonel Cushing himself in a formal deposition: "The gentleman informed me," he deposed, "that he was the Mr. Swartwout mentioned in the letter, and I presented him to General Wilkinson as the friend of General Dayton, and requested him to take a seat with us at table, which he did. Mr. Swartwout then observed that Mr. Ogden and himself, being on their way to New Orleans, had learned at Fort Adams that our troops and some militia were assembling at Nachitoches, from whence they were to march against the Spanish army, then in our neighborhood; and that the object of his visit was to act with us as a volunteer. He remained with us for some time, and conversed on various topics, but said nothing which could excite a suspicion against him; and he left us, with a strong impression, on my mind that his business to New Orleans was of a commercial nature, and could be conducted by Mr. Ogden during his absence. While he was in my quarters, I was called out on business, and was absent from five to ten minutes."

During this brief absence of Colonel Cushing from the room, Swartwout seized the opportunity to give the general the important packet of which he was the bearer. As a specimen of the flat contradictions with which every part of the evidence respecting Burr's expedition abounds, it may be mentioned that Wilkinson asserts that the packet was slyly slipped into his hand; while Swartwout swears that, being alone with the general, he presented the packet to him in the ordinary manner. It was received in silence, and, soon after, Swartwout left the general and strolled about the camp, comport-

ing himself, in all respects, as became his assumed character of volunteer.

It was not till evening that Wilkinson had time and opportunity to examine the important packet. He found it to consist of three letters, two of them in cipher, and one in ordinary writing. First, there was the following letter from Burr to Wilkinson, introducing Swartwout. This was in common hand: "Dear Sir, Mr. Swartwout, the brother of Colonel S., of New York, being on his way down the Mississippi, and presuming he may pass you at some post on the river, has requested of me a letter of introduction, which I give with pleasure, as he is a most amiable young man and highly respected from his family and connections. I pray you to afford any friendly offices which his situation may require, and beg you to pardon the trouble which this may give you."

Secondly, the packet contained the celebrated cipher letter from Burr to the general, a copy of which, as given in Wilkinson's Memoirs, is as follows:

"Yours, post-marked 13th of May, is received. I, Aaron Burr, have obtained funds, and have actually commenced the enterprise. Detachments from different points, and under different pretenses, will rendezvous on the Ohio, 1st November — every thing internal and external, favors views; protection of England is secured. T—— is going to Jamaica to arrange with the admiral on that station; it will meet on the Mississippi. ——, England, ——, navy of the United States are ready to join, and final orders are given to my friends and followers: it will be a host of choice spirits. Wilkinson shall be second to Burr only, Wilkinson shall dictate the rank and promotion of his officers. Burr will proceed westward, 1st August, never more to return; with him goes his daughter; the husband will follow in October with a corps of worthies.

"Send forth an intelligent and confidential friend with whom Burr may confer; he shall return immediately with further interesting details; this is essential to concert and harmony of movement. Send a list of all persons known to Wilkinson, west of the mountains, who may be useful, with a note delineating their characters. By your messenger send me four or

five commissions of your officers, which you can borrow under any pretense you please; they shall be returned faithfully Already are orders to the contractors given to forward six months' provisions to points Wilkinson may name: this shall not be used until the last moment, and then under proper injunctions. The project is brought to the point so long desired. Burr guaranties the result with his life and honor, with the honor, and fortunes of hundreds of the best blood of our country.

"Burr's plan of operation is, to move down rapidly from the Falls on the 15th of September, with the first 500 or 1,000 men in light boats, now constructing for that purpose, to be at Natchez between the 5th and 15th of December; there to meet Wilkinson; there to determine whether it will be expedient in the first instance to seize on or pass by Baton Rouge. On receipt of this send an answer. Draw on Burr for all expenses, etc. The people of the country to which we are going, are prepared to receive us. Their agents, now with Burr, say, that if we will protect their religion, and will not subject them to a foreign power, that in three weeks all will be settled. The gods invite to glory and fortune; it remains to be seen whether we deserve the boon. The bearer of this goes express to you; he will hand a formal letter of introduction to you from Burr. He is a man of inviolable honor and perfect discretion; formed to execute rather than to project; capable of relating facts with fidelity, and incapable of relating them otherwise. He is thoroughly informed of the plans and intentions of Burr, and will disclose to you as far as you inquire and no further. He has imbibed a reverence for your character, and may be embarrassed in your presence. Put him at ease, and he will satisfy you."

Thirdly, as though to make assurance doubly sure, the following letter from Dayton was brought to bear on the general's mind:

"Dear Sir—It is now well ascertained that you are to be displaced in next session. Jefferson will affect to yield reluctantly to the public sentiment, but yield he will. Prepare yourself, therefore, for it. You know the rest. You are not

a man to despair, or even despond, especially when such prospects offer in another quarter. Are you ready? Are your numerous associates ready? Wealth and glory, Louisiana and Mexico! I shall have time to receive a letter from you before I set out for Ohio. OHIO. Address one to me here, and another in Cincinnati. Receive and treat my nephew affectionately as you would receive your friend DAYTON."

It was late at night before Wilkinson had deciphered these letters sufficiently to have an idea of their drift. His resolution was taken without delay. Burr had *overdone it;* had put more upon the general than he had the strength to execute. The continuation of Colonel Cushing's deposition shows that, within a few hours after Wilkinson had mastered the contents of the packet, he committed himself to an exposure of the scheme. "The next morning," says Cushing, "I was walking on the gallery in front of my quarters, when General Wilkinson came up, and taking me aside, informed me that he had something of a very serious nature to communicate to me. So much so that, although it was necessary to hold it in strict reserve for the present, he begged me to bear it in mind, that I might be able to make a fair statement of it at any future period. He then asked me if I knew, or had heard, of any enterprise being on foot in the western States. I replied that I had heard nothing on the subject, and asked him what the enterprise was to which he alluded. He then said, 'Yes, my friend, a great number of individuals possessing wealth, popularity, and talents, are, at this moment, associated for purposes inimical to the government of the United States. Colonel Burr is at their head, and the young gentleman who delivered you the letter last evening, is one of his emissaries. The story of serving as a volunteer is only a mask. He has brought me a letter from Colonel Burr, which, being in cipher, I have not yet been fully able to make out; but I have discovered that his object is treasonable, and that it is my duty to oppose him by every means in my power. He assures me that he has funds; says the navy is with him; offers to make me second in command, and to give the officers of the army any thing I may ask for them; and he requests

me to send a confidential friend to confer with him at Nashville, in Tennessee. In fact, he seems to calculate on me and the army as ready to join to him.'

"I then asked the general whether he had received any information or instruction on this subject from government, to which he replied that he had not, and that he must therefore adopt such measures as, in his judgment, were best calculated to defend the country. He said he would immediately march to the Sabine, and endeavor to make such terms with the Spanish commander as would justify him in removing the greater part of his force to the Mississippi; and that the moment this could be effected, he would send me to New Orleans in a light barge, with orders to secure the French train of artillery at that post, and to put the place in the best possible situation for defense, and that he would follow with every man that could be spared from Nachitoches, with all possible expedition. He told me that he would give the information he had received, to the President of the United States, and solicit particular instructions for his government, but as delay might prove ruinous, he would pursue the course before suggested, as the only means in his power, to save the country, until the pleasure of the President could be known."

At the last moment, then, Wilkinson shrank from the work expected of him. The probability is strong that he always *meant* to do so. That he was a weak, vain, false, greedy man, is likely enough. That carried away by the magic of Burr's resistless *presence*, and hoping the scheme would never involve *him* in its folds, he suggested, encouraged, and aided it, is very probable. That he had given Burr to understand in some vague way, that he would strike a blow which would begin a war, whenever it should be needed, is also probable That he chose the part he did choose from a calculation of advantages to himself, from motives mean and mercenary rests upon evidence that convinces.* Nevertheless, the fact re-

* The charge that Wilkinson sent a confidential agent, Walter Burling, to Mexico, to demand of the Viceroy a compensation of two hundred thousand dollars for his services in suppressing Burr's expedition, is supported by the following evidence: 1. The Vice-Queen of Mexico, in 1816, after her hus

mains, that he did *not* "strike the blow;" he did *not* involve two nations in war; he did *not* shape his course according to the wishes of Aaron Burr, instead of the orders of Thomas Jefferson. If he was a traitor, he was a traitor to his confederates, not to his country, his commission, his flag. True, the country, particularly the western States, desired war, and would have applauded him for beginning it. But to a soldier, his country speaks only through the commands of its chief.

For ten days Swartwout remained in camp, during which Wilkinson seemed to favor and applaud the project, and extracted from him all the information he possessed. Swartwout conversed freely, replying to all of Wilkinson's questions, without suspicion of his treachery. "I inquired," says Wilkinson, in his Memoirs, "what would be their course? He said, this territory (Louisiana) would be revolutionized, where the people were ready to join them, and that there would be some seizing he supposed, at New Orleans; that they expected to be ready to embark about the 1st of February, and intended to land at Vera Cruz, and to march from thence to Mexico. I observed that there were several millions of dollars in the bank of this place, to which he replied, We know it full well;' and on remarking that they certainly did not mean to violate private property, he said they 'merely meant to borrow, and would return it; that they must equip themselves in New Orleans; that they expected naval protection from Great Britain; that Captain ——, and the officers of our navy were so disgusted with the government, that they were ready to join; that similar disgusts prevailed throughout the

band's death, asserted it repeatedly to Colonel Richard Raynal Keene, an Irish gentleman in the Mexican service. 2. Dr. Patrick Mangan, an Irish priest and professor, who served as interpreter between the Viceroy and Burling, testified, in writing, to the same effect, adding, that the application was contemptuously refused by the Viceroy, and Burling ordered out of the country. 3. Colonel Keene, who afterward practiced law in New Orleans, *deposed* to having heard the statements of the Vice-Queen, as aforesaid; and placed on permanent and legal record in New Orleans, a declaration of the Vice-Queen's to the same effect, signed with her own hand; also, a formal statement by Dr. Mangan; and lastly, his own affidavit. All of these documents are duly preserved in New Orleans at the proper office.

western country, where the people were zealous in favor of the enterprise, and that pilot-boat built schooners were contracted for along our western coasts for their service.' "

Swartwout left the camp on the 18th of October, and proceeded on his way down the river, nothing doubting. Wilkinson then set about sending information to the President. To conceal his object, he caused Lieutenant Smith to resign his commission on pretense of a desire to return to his home in the East; and to him Wilkinson intrusted dispatches for the President. To pay his expenses to Washington, he furnished him with five hundred dollars; none too large a sum for a journey upon which a man might have to buy a boat or two, and wear out two or three horses.

The messenger left camp on the 21st of October, and delivered his dispatches to the President on the 25th of November. On the 27th, Jefferson issued his proclamation, and sent it flying through the States, paralyzing the enterprise as it flew, and filling the country with consternation. It is noticeable, that neither in Wilkinson's dispatches, nor in Jefferson's proclamation, was the name of Burr mentioned. Wilkinson, indeed, expressly and falsely wrote that he did not know who the prime mover of the conspiracy was. He admitted, afterward, that he wrote a letter to Burr after the receipt of the cipher, but, upon reflection, pursued the letter and destroyed it. The President's proclamation merely announced that unlawful enterprises were on foot in the western States; warned all persons "to withdraw from the same without delay," "as they will answer the contrary at their peril, and incur prosecution with all the rigors of the law;" and commanded all officers, civil and military, to use their immediate and utmost exertions to bring the offending persons to condign punishment.

While Wilkinson was still in some doubt what course to pursue, he received a letter from an acquaintance in Natchez, which (as he says) decided him. It stated that a well-authenticated rumor was afloat, "that a plan to revolutionize the western country has been formed, matured, and is ready to explode; that Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, Orleans, and In

diana, are combined to declare themselves independent on the 15th of November. That proposals have been made to some of the most influential characters of St. Louis, by an accredited agent of the conspiracy, to join in the plan." And pages more to the same effect.

Then it was that the general, perceiving the golden opportunity, fully resolved to set up in the character of Deliverer of his Country. He went to the Sabine, patched up an arrangement with the Spaniards, put every thing in train for the withdrawal of the troops (who retired cursing the general for ordering them away from an enemy they were eager to engage), sent forward an officer to begin the work of preparing New Orleans for defense, and, on the 24th of November, arrived there himself to deliver a devoted province from spoliation and ruin.

Prodigious was his zeal, enormous were his labors, terrible and ridiculous was the excitement he created. The current belief was, that the "conspiracy" extended from one end of the Union to the other, embracing immense numbers of the most wealthy and influential citizens; that seven thousand armed men were on their way to the scene; and that Burr, with a vanguard of two thousand, was then descending the river, and might be expected at any moment to fall upon the town; that the city swarmed with his adherents, who only awaited his arrival to throw off the mask and assist in the reduction of the place. Martial law was proclaimed. Wilkinson dispatched a lieutenant to the British admiral at Jamaica, to put him on his guard against Burr's emissaries. A public meeting was held, at which Wilkinson harangued the excited multitude, and gave them a narrative of Swartwout's mission, and of the dread secrets his acuteness had drawn from that agent of treason. Governor Claiborne, too, addressed the meeting, exhorting every citizen to stand to the defense of a country toppling on the verge of ruin. The volunteer battalion offered their services; its ranks were swelled by hundreds of recruits; and, dividing itself into companies, it paraded by day, and patrolled by night, giving the city the appearance of a garrisoned town. New stockades were con-

structed in all directions. A party of sixty men were stationed at a point some distance above the city, and ordered to stop and thoroughly overhaul every descending craft. Business was at a stand-still. The crews of the vessels in port, American and foreign, volunteered to aid in the defense of the city.

Emboldened by the general terror, and supported by orders from the President, Wilkinson soon began to make arrests. Swartwout, Bollman, Ogden, and Adair, were seized, and incontinently shipped, per schooner, to Baltimore. A hundred men gallantly surrounded the hotel where General Adair lived, and, seizing him as he sat at table eating his dinner, bore him off in triumph to head-quarters. There were secret sessions of the legislature; there were proclamations from Governor Claiborne, and from the governors of the adjacent territories. The Spaniards were in alarm. As the news sped on its way to Mexico, guards were doubled, forts were repaired, and garrisons were increased. The western States, agitated all the summer by rumors, soon caught the infection of this new frenzy, and increased its virulence.

A month passed. The new year was at hand. No signs of the flotilla yet. Wilkinson began to be uneasy. He was growing ridiculous, and he felt it. Burr's adherents, who comprised the élite of the young American residents, particularly the members of the bar, recovered from the stunning effect of Wilkinson's vociferation, and ventured to oppose his violent and arbitrary proceedings. Half the month of January passed, and still no flotilla. The alarm subsiding, we find the grand jury *presenting Wilkinson's measures* as illegal and unconstitutional. The press denounced him too. Comforted, however, by a very long, complimentary, and confidential letter from Jefferson, he held his course, and ruled the territory with a high and mighty hand — to the wrathful disgust of majority of the American residents.

By this time the eastern States had caught the alarm. Jefferson had received full particulars of Swartwout's mission. Bollman and Swartwout had reached the seat of government, had been examined, and discharged for want of evidence — as

well they might be, for not one unlawful act had been committed by them. Special messages from the President, attributing to Burr designs the most treasonable, were sent to Congress, where they provoked excited discussion. Military companies of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Boston wrote to the President, offering their services. The Senate actually passed an act suspending the writ of Habeas Corpus; but the House, recovering its serenity in time, rejected the measure by one hundred and thirteen to nineteen.

While the public excitement was at fever heat, General Eaton came forward with a deposition which raised it to the boiling point, and turned the tide of feeling so strongly against Burr that it was never reversed in his life-time, and has not been reversed to this day. With General Eaton, Burr had conversed in the same style as that which had so shocked the honest Morgans; and with the more freedom, as he knew that Eaton felt himself aggrieved by the government's delaying to compensate him for his services and disbursements in Barbary. Very few weeks elapsed, *after* this deposition had been made, before Eaton's account with the government was settled by the payment of ten thousand dollars. In the trial, Eaton's evidence will be given at length. Here it is only necessary to say that his wildly-exaggerated version of Burr's wild talk about a separation of the western States, and throwing Congress into the Potomac, was the testimony which, in connection with the cipher to Wilkinson, convinced the people of the United States that Aaron Burr was a traitor.

To return to Blennerhassett Island.

Graham, the government's confidential agent, in the performance of the duty intrusted to him, reached Marietta, where the batteaux were building, about the middle of November, and immediately obtained an interview with Blennerhassett. Passing himself off as one of Burr's confederates, he soon got from that unsuspecting gentleman the information he desired. He found Blennerhassett all enthusiasm, and unconscious that the enterprise in which he was engaged could be seriously objected to by any one. It was the settle-

ment on the Washita that seemed to engage his attention most; the expedition to Mexico being a secondary and conditional object. Graham, supposing him to be a deluded man, the tool of artful conspirators, presented himself, at length, in his true character; did his utmost to persuade Blennerhassett to abandon the enterprise, and informed him that any attempt to descend the Ohio with an armed force would be prevented by the authorities. Blennerhassett's ardor was cooled for a day or two by this interview with Graham, but the opportune arrival at the island of a "corps of worthies," young adventurers from the city of New York, revived his hopes. His wife, too, who was more eager for the scheme than he had ever been, adding her eloquence, all his old enthusiasm was soon rekindled, and he longed for the day of their departure.

Graham, meanwhile, completed his inquiries at Marietta, and went to Chillicothe, then the capital of the State of Ohio; and, laying his information before the governor, asked the aid of the State in suppressing the enterprise. The legislature was in session. The governor sent them a secret message, to which they promptly responded by passing an act empowering him to use the resources of the State for the purpose desired. He proceeded to act with energy. The militia of the district, under command of a major-general, were called out, and marched to Marietta, where they captured the fifteen batteaux. To intercept parties from above, they were stationed along the banks of the river, where they occupied themselves with drinking whisky and playing upon one another practical jokes. They were as rude, undisciplined a horde of young backwoodsmen as have ever been assembled for mischief or for pleasure. The company in charge of the captured boats were so careless that an attempt of a party of Burr's men to retake them came within an ace of succeeding. One of the boats was got safely away, but before the others could be set afloat, the militiamen were roused, and the party had to fly.

The islanders, astounded and dismayed by these events, knew not what course to take. Blennerhassett Island, like all the islands of the Ohio river, being part of the State of Virginia, they felt themselves safe from the authorities of Ohio.

But early in December, the President's proclamation reached the neighborhood. Under its authority, the colonel of a militia regiment in Wood county, Virginia, called out his men, with the intention of marching to the island, arresting the whole band of confederates, and seizing their arms and stores. News of this movement was brought to Blennerhassett the day before the one named for its execution. As soon as night fell, four boats were hurriedly loaded, and the whole party of confederates, thirty or forty in number, embarked and made the best of their way down the river, leaving Mrs. Blennerhassett and her two little boys, with some servants, to abide the storm of the morrow. It was arranged that she should procure their "family boat" from Marietta, and follow the flying band in a few days.

The next morning, the expected irruption of wild militia took place. The colonel, finding the island deserted, left a small party in charge, and marched across one of the giant "bends" of the Ohio to intercept the fugitives at the mouth of the Great Kanawha. Ascertaining that the boats had not yet passed that point, he stationed a company on the bank of the river with the strictest injunctions to watch all night. It was a cold evening in December, however; the whisky-flask circulated; a drunken debauch ensued; the flotilla glided silently by, and, before daylight, was beyond pursuit. A day or two after, a party of fourteen young men on their way down the river to join the expedition, were arrested near the island, and conducted to it for safe keeping. A ridiculous examination took place, in one of Blennerhasset's grand apartments, before three county justices, to whom the young city gallants paid small respect. Nothing whatever appearing against them, they were discharged.

It was during this examination that the spirit of license and riot broke out among the militiamen. The lady of the mansion had gone herself to Marietta to demand her boat of the authorities, and the colonel of the militia, who was a gentleman and a soldier, was also absent. First of all, the men broke into the wine-cellar, and there drank themselves into Vandals. Then, they ranged the house, destroying or dis

figuring wherever they went; firing rifle-balls through painted ceilings, tearing down costly drapery, and dashing to pieces mirrors and vases. Then they rushed, like so many savages, about the grounds, destroying the shrubbery, and breaking down trellises and arbors. The ornamental fences were torn away, piecemeal, to make fires for the sentinels at night. In the midst of this riot and destruction Mrs. Blennerhassett returned; but the embarrassments of her situation, and her anxiety for the success of the expedition were such, that she surveyed the ruin of her abode with indifference.

She had been refused the boat. In this dilemma, the party of young men who had just been released, and who were preparing to continue their journey, offered her an apartment in theirs. In a few hours she was ready, and, December 17th, left her island in the hands of the lawless crew who had laid it desolate.

Burr was still at Nashville. Graham learning that boats for the expedition were building on the Cumberland, hastened, after rousing Ohio and Kentucky, to put the powers of Tennessee on the alert. An express with the President's proclamation reached the Governor of Tennessee on the 19th, and preparations were made immediately to seize the boats and arrest the men. But timely information reached the chief. On the 22d, with two boats and a few men, armed only according to the custom of the country, he dropped down the Cumberland. The next day Graham himself arrived at Nashville, to find the "conspirators" beyond his reach.

At the mouth of the Cumberland, the parties met; in all, thirteen boats and about sixty men. Colonel Burr here briefly addressed the band of adventurers, drawn up on the bank of the Ohio. He said he had intended here to make an exposition of his designs and plan of operations, but the events which had occurred obliged him to defer doing so to a future opportunity. He should go forward, and had still confidence in the success of their enterprise.

Ignorant of Wilkinson's treachery, away went Burr with his flotilla down the Ohio, down the Mississippi, stopping boldly at the forts on the banks, asking and receiving favors,

and occasionally picking up a recruit or two. He wore a smiling face, and reassured every one by the cheerful serenity of his bearing. It was not until he reached Bayou Pierre, about thirty miles above Natchez, that he heard of the course which had been pursued by Wilkinson, and of the prodigious excitement which his measures had created in the lower country. There, too, he read the proclamation of the Governor of Mississippi, charging him and his followers with being conspirators against their country, and calling on the officers of the government to renew their oath of fidelity to the United States, and give their best efforts toward crushing this nefarious plot.

Whatever his feelings may have been at the discovery, Colonel Burr never for one moment lost his self-possession; but proceeded, on the very instant, to grapple with this new complication of difficulties. He wrote a public letter denying the truth of the governor's allegations, and asserting that he had no objects but such as were lawful and honorable. "If," said he, "the alarm which has been excited should not be appeased by this declaration, I invite my fellow-citizens to visit me at this place, and to receive from me, in person, such further explanations as may be necessary to their satisfaction, presuming that when my views are understood, they will receive the countenance of all good men." This letter, he requested, might be read to the militia, who were assembled for his arrest.

But the excitement had risen to a height which could not be allayed by fine words. The news of Burr's arrival at Bayou Pierre reached Natchez on the 14th of January, when the whole militia force of the neighborhood, who had been for weeks expecting the summons, seized their arms, and hurried to the rendezvous. In a few hours, two hundred and seventy five men were ready to embark. All one cold and dismal night they worked their way up the river to a point near where the dread flotilla was moored. There disembarking, they were joined by a troop of cavalry, and were soon in readiness to march against the *foe*. It was thought best, however, first to ascertain if Colonel Burr was disposed to resist this formidable

array, or would surrender peacefully to the lawful authorities. For this purpose, George Poindexter, the Attorney-General of the Territory, and Major Shields of the militia, visited the flotilla, and had an interview with its commander.

A letter from the acting governor was handed to Burr, who read it, and spoke with some contempt of the public alarm to which it alluded. "As to any projects," said he, "which may have been formed between General Wilkinson and myself, heretofore, they are now completely frustrated by the perfidious conduct of Wilkinson; and the world must pronounce him a perfidious villain. If I am sacrificed, my port-folio will prove him to be such." He declared that, so far was he from having any design hostile to the United States, he had intended to meet the governor at the general muster at Bayou Pierre. Upon the Attorney-General's urging him to surrender, he demanded an interview with the governor. After some further colloquy, the parties separated, Burr agreeing to meet Governor Mead on the following day at a designated house near by.

The governor came at the time appointed, and, after meeting Burr, demanded his unconditional surrender, and that of his whole party, to the civil authorities, and gave him fifteen minutes to decide. Resistance being out of the question, Burr only requested that if Wilkinson should attempt to get possession of his person by a military force, it might be resisted. He then surrendered, and was conducted to the neighboring town of Washington, where two citizens became sureties for his appearance at court on the following day, in the sum of ten thousand dollars. His men remained in the vicinity of the flotilla.

A court of justice was to Aaron Burr what his native heath was to MacGregor. On that field he was invincible. It was only after warm discussions that it was concluded that he could be lawfully tried in the Territory. The next step was to get him indicted for some offense. A grand jury was impaneled, and witnesses were sent in to them. Imagine the feelings of the Attorney-General when he read the result of all his toils in the following presentments:

"The grand jury of the Mississippi Territory, on a due in

vestigation of the evidence brought before them, are of opinion that Aaron Burr has not been guilty of any crime or misdemeanor against the laws of the United States, or of this Territory; or given any just cause of alarm or inquietude to the good people of the same.

"The grand jurors present, as a grievance, the late military expedition, unnecessarily, as they conceive, fitted out against the person and property of the said Aaron Burr, when no resistance had been made to the civil authorities.

"The grand jurors also present, as a grievance, destructive of personal liberty, the late military arrests, made without warrant, and, as they conceive, without other lawful authority; and they do sincerely regret that so much cause has been given to the enemies of our glorious Constitution, to rejoice at such measures being adopted, in a neighboring Territory, as, if sanctioned by the Executive of our country, must sap the vitals of our political existence, and crumble this glorious fabric in the dust."

It was of no avail for the Attorney-General to declare that such presentments were a disgrace and an outrage, nor for the judge to pronounce them impertinent and useless. The people were with the prisoner. Nothing approaching or resembling a breach of the law had been committed by him; and, in short, the grand jury had made up its mind, and would not recede from its position.

His companions were at perfect liberty. A Natchez newspaper of the time, commenting on this attempt to indict, says that "Burr and his men were *caressed* by a number of the wealthy merchants and planters of Adams county; several balls were given to them as marks of respect and confidence." Also, "that the proceedings against the accused were more like a mock trial than a criminal prosecution, and that, during the trial, Judge Bruin appeared more like his advocate than his impartial judge." All of which is extremely probable.

Having, as he thought, fully complied with his recognizances, Colonel Burr demanded a legal release from the court. This was refused. Learning that further and more arbitrary proceedings were intended against him by the government offi

cials, and perceiving the utter hopelessness of attempting to proceed, and that his presence must embarrass, but could not assist this band, he resolved to fly. Disguising himself in the dress of a boatman, he crossed to the eastern side of the Mississippi and disappeared in the wilderness.

At the meeting of the court on the following morning, he, f course, did not present himself, and there was a great show of surprise. The governor, who, it is said, had connived at his escape, promptly offered two thousand dollars for his arrest. Two or three days passed without any tidings of the fugitive, though the surrounding country was scoured by parties in search. At length, a colored boy was seen, opposite where the flotilla lay, riding one of Burr's horses, and wearing an overcoat that had been his. He was seized forthwith, and thoroughly searched. Sewed in the cape of the coat was found a note addressed to "C. T. and D. F." (Comfort Tyler and Davis Floyd, leading men in the expedition), which read as follows: "If you are yet together, keep so, and I will join you to-morrow night. In the mean while, put all your arms in perfect order. Ask no questions of the bearer, but tell him all you may think I wish to know. He does not know that this is from me, nor where I am."

In consequence of this discovery, Burr's men were arrested, placed under guard, and kept as prisoners until the alarm was over. But no further trace of the chief was seen in the neighborhood. He had left the vicinity, and was making his way through a dismal wilderness, toward the port of Pensacola, where lay a British man-of-war, in which he hoped to find a temporary refuge.

Blennerhassett, after his discharge from custody, returned homeward, and had reached Kentucky, when he was again arrested and committed to prison, on a charge of treason. Others of Burr's confederates, who had the means, returned to the eastern States, and forgot the dream of glory in the pursuits of civil life. A large number of the band remained in the Territory, supplying it, as the Attorney-General afterward remarked, with a superfluity of school-masters, music-masters, and dancing-masters, for many years. The narrative of these

events, published in all the newspapers of the land, drew public attention to the south-western Territories of the Union, and attracted (says Dr. Monette, the historian of the Valley of the Mississippi) thousands of emigrants thither from the Atlantic and western States.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE ARREST.

BURR RECOGNIZED — THE PURSUIT — BURR CAPTIVATES THE SHERIFF — INTERVIEW BETWEEN BURR AND CAPTAIN GAINES — THE ARREST — BURR'S DEPORTMENT AS A PRISONER — HIS DEPARTURE FROM FORT STODDART — THE JOURNEY THROUGH THE WILDERNESS — ANECDOTE — BURR'S APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE — ARRIVAL AT RICHMOND — EXAMINATION BEFORE CHIEF JUSTICE MARSHALL — BURR DEFENDS HIMSELF — ADMITTED TO BAIL — JEFFERSON.

ON a cold evening in February, two young lawyers were playing backgammon in a cabin of the village of Wakefield, Washington county, Alabama. The hour of ten had arrived, and they were still absorbed in the game, when the distant tramp of horses arrested their attention. Two travelers rode up to the door, one of whom, without dismounting, inquired for the tavern. It was pointed out to him. He then asked the road to Colonel Hinson's, a noted resident of the vicinity. One of the lawyers, Perkins by name, replied that the house was seven miles distant, the road exceedingly difficult to find, and there was a dangerous creek to be crossed.

While he was explaining the road, the light of their pine-wood fire flashed occasionally upon the countenance of the traveler, who had asked the questions. Perkins gazed upon the face as though it fascinated him. The eyes of the stranger sparkled like diamonds, as he sat, composed and erect, upon a superb horse, better caparisoned than was usual in the wilderness. His dress was the rude homespun of the country, but the quick eye of Perkins observed that his boots were far too elegantly shaped, and of materials much too fine, to accord with the coarse, ill-cut, pantaloons from which they protruded.

The travelers rode on. Perkins's suspicions were aroused. The striking features of the man with whom he had conversed, the incongruity of his dress, his superior air, the lateness of

the hour for strangers to be abroad in a region so wild and unknown, all confirmed the impression which had been left on his mind. Rushing into the cabin, he exclaimed,

"That is Aaron Burr! I have read a description of him in the proclamation. I can not be mistaken. Let us follow him to Hinson's, and take measures for his arrest."

His companion, not so easily moved, ridiculed the project of pursuing a traveler at so late an hour, merely on a conjecture; and, in short, refused to go. But Perkins, not deterred from his purpose, hastened to a neighboring cabin, roused the sheriff of the county, and told him his story. In a few min utes the two men were equipped and mounted, and rode off at a rapid pace through the pine woods.

The mysterious travelers, meanwhile, made their way to Colonel Hinson's residence. Hinson was absent from home. His wife, roused by their halloo, rose, peeped through a small window, and, seeing by their holsters and accoutrements that they were strangers, made no reply to them, but quietly closed the window, and returned to bed. The strangers alighted and entered the kitchen, where a cheerful fire was still burning.

Shortly after Perkins and the sheriff came in sight of the house. The former remained behind in the woods, while the sheriff went forward to reconnoiter, agreeing to return to Perkins as soon as he should have discovered any thing of importance. According to custom, the sheriff hailed the house, when the lady, reassured by hearing a well-known voice, descended to entertain her midnight guests.

The sheriff entered the kitchen, the strangers eyeing him keenly. Supper was soon ready, and the party sat down to it, Perkins, meanwhile, shivering in the woods, and wondering that his confederate did not return. As the meal progressed, the traveler with the sparkling eyes led the conversation in so sprightly a manner, was so polite and grateful to the lady, and made himself so agreeable generally, that the heart of the sheriff relented. He came to arrest, and remained to admire. The lady, too, was charmed with her guest's amiable manners. The repast ended, the captivating stranger returned to the kitchen fire, leaving his companion at the table. Now

was the sheriff's opportunity. Whispering his suspicions to the lady of the house, he induced her to make the important inquiry.

"Have I not," said she to the traveler who still sat at the table, "the honor of entertaining Colonel Burr, the gentleman who has just walked out?"

The individual addressed (a country guide) not being an adept in diplomacy, showed palpable signs of embarrassment at the question. He made no reply whatever, but immediately rejoined his companion in the kitchen. The subject was not resumed. After some further, and very agreeable courteous conversation, the strangers went to bed, and the sheriff, unwilling to encounter the impetuosity of Perkins, and resolved to take no part in arresting so amiable a gentleman, stretched himself before the fire, and slept. In the morning the traveler breakfasted, inquired the road to Pensacola, thanked the lady, again and again, for her hospitable attentions, and rode off, the sheriff actually accompanying them as their guide for a short distance before returning home.

Perkins remained at his post in the woods until his patience was exhausted. Suspecting, at last, that his confederate had fallen a prey to the blandishments of a man renowned for his seductive manners, this indomitable son of the wilderness was only the more resolved upon effecting the arrest. Riding, with furious haste, to Mannahubba Bluff, he borrowed a canoe and a negro from a friend, paddled down the Alabama, and arrived, as the day was breaking, at Fort Stoddart. Rushing into the fort, he informed the commandant, Captain Gaines (afterward the well-known Major-General Gaines) of his suspicions. Gaines entered into Perkins's project with such spirit, that by sunrise, with a file of dragoons, he and Perkins rode out of the fort toward the Pensacola road.

About nine in the morning, they met the two travelers descending a hill, not more than two miles from Hinson's house, when Captain Gaines rode forward and addressed the suspected personage.

"I presume, sir," said he, "that I have the honor of addressing Colonel Burr."

"I am a traveler in the country," replied the stranger, "and do not recognize your right to ask such a question."

Whereupon, Gaines said, "I arrest you at the instance of the federal Government."

"By what authority do you arrest a traveler upon the highway, on his own private business?" asked the stranger.

"I am an officer of the army," answered the captain. "I hold in my hands the proclamations of the President and the Governor, directing your arrest."

"You are a young man," rejoined the traveler, "and may not be aware of the responsibilities which result from arresting travelers."

"I am aware of the responsibilities," said Gaines, "but I know my duty."

The traveler now broke into an animated and eloquent denunciation of those proclamations, protesting his innocence, asserting that the charges against him originated in the malevolence of his enemies, and pointing out to Gaines the liabilities he would incur if he should arrest him.

But Gaines, assuming a severe aspect, replied, "My mind is made up. You must accompany me to Fort Stoddart, where you shall be treated with all the respect due to one who has been Vice-President of the United States, so long as you make no attempt to escape from me."

The traveler looked at him for a few moments, apparently surprised at this unwonted firmness; then, with an inclination of the head, indicated his willingness to accompany the young officer. He bade good-by to his guide, who returned to Wakefield, wheeled his horse round, and rode by the captain's side towards the fort, conversing on the way, with his usual nonchalance, on ordinary topics. Arriving at the fort early in the evening, Colonel Burr — for Colonel Burr it was — was shown to a room, where he dined alone, and sat reading to a late hour, while the tread of the sentinel was heard without.

In the night, it is related, he heard a groan in the room adjoining. He left his book, and, entering the apartment, saw the sick brother of Captain Gaines lying in bed. He spoke tenderly to the sufferer, inquired his complaint, felt of his

pulse, told him he had traveled much, and knew something of medicine, and offered his services. The sick man revived under his gentle touch and encouraging tones, and entered into conversation with his distinguished nurse. Burr made many inquiries of the patient, who was a Choctaw trader, respecting the Indians, their ways, and commerce. The conversation was singularly cheerful and pleasant, and completely won the good will of the sick merchant.

The next day Colonel Burr was presented to the wife of the commandant, dined with the family, played several games of chess with the lady, and bore himself, in all respects, as he would have done in a drawing-room of Philadelphia or New York. Every night he sat by the bedside of Mr. Gaines, administering his medicines, and cheering him by his animated, intelligent conversation. The patient became warmly attached to him, and mourned deeply over his many misfortunes; but, with all their intimacy and fondness, not the slightest allusion to Burr's situation ever passed the lips of either. Day by day, the prisoner mingled gayly in the narrow circle of the fort, played his games of chess, won every one's heart, and appeared to give himself no concern respecting the future.

Two weeks passed. Captain Gaines had resolved to send his prisoner direct to the seat of government, a thousand miles distant, four or five hundred miles of which lay through a nearly unbroken wilderness. He had been busy during those two weeks in preparing an expedition for the safe conduct of the prisoner, and on the 5th of March his arrangements were complete, and the journey was begun. The tears of the ladies residing at the fort fell fast as Colonel Burr, escorted by a file of soldiers, went down to the shore and embarked on board the boat provided for the ascent of the Alabama. He had no enemies there. The men could have no ill-will to one whose offense had been a desire to terminate the hateful rule of the Spaniards; and women were always and everywhere his friends. As the boat, with its crew of soldiers, glided past the few houses on the river's bank, all the ladies, it is said, waved their handkerchiefs, except those who

were obliged to put those weapons to a tenderer use. One of the ladies of the Alabama named her infant Aaron Burr; and he was not the only young gentleman in the South-west who bore through life a similar record of the events amid which he was born.

Above Lake Tensau, the party disembarked, and the prisoner was formally given into the custody of the guard who were to conduct him through the wilderness to the Atlantic States. This guard consisted of nine men, commanded by the redoubtable Perkins, who had selected and equipped the party. Before taking the final plunge into the forest, Perkins, fearful of Burr's fascinating powers, and mindful of their recent effect upon his friend the sheriff, took his band aside, warned them of the danger, required from each a solemn promise to steel his soul against the prisoner's winning arts, and indeed to avoid all conversation with him, except such as should be strictly necessary. All having given their word of honor to the effect required, the order was given to prepare for an immediate start.

The prisoner still wore the dress in which he had fled from the Mississippi. It consisted, we are told,* of coarse, homespun pantaloons of the color of copperas, a jacket of common drab cloth, and an old hat, with a broad, flapping brim. It was said, as he bestrode the superb horse which he had ridden at the time of his capture, his hat hanging over his face, but not concealing his brilliant eyes, that his appearance and bearing were as distinguished as when, seated in the chair of office, he had presided over the Senate of the United States. When the guard had mounted, and the word was given to march, he said good-by to the few by-standers in a cheerful voice, and took the place assigned him in the file.

The party struck into the woods by the Indian trail, and marched, from necessity, in the Indian manner — the gigantic Perkins at the head of the line, the prisoner in the middle.

* Most of the facts and incidents relating to Burr's arrest, were derived from the excellent history of Alabama, by Mr. A. J. Pickett, who collected them from eye-witnesses, or from persons to whom they had been related by eye-witnesses.

At night, the only tent carried by the party was pitched and assigned to Burr, who slept guarded by armed men and lulled by the howling of innumerable wolves. He slept soundly. Rising with the dawn, the first to be in readiness for the day's march, he took his place with alacrity in the line. The men were very attentive to his wants, and treated him with the respect due rather from an escort than a guard. He, on his part, was most courteous to them, and a kind of silent friendship grew up between them.

It was a perilous and fatiguing march. For several days in succession, the chilling spring rains fell in torrents upon the unprotected horsemen, swelling the rivulets to rivers, and the creeks to rushing floods. Sometimes, the whole party were swimming their horses over a rapid stream. Often, they toiled wearily through mire, more dangerous than the flood itself. Hundreds of Indians thronged their pathway. But, amid angry elements, wild beasts, vast swamps, boundless forests, and treacherous savages, the dauntless Perkins held his course, marching swiftly at the head of his company, and urging them along at the rate of forty miles a day. In the journey through Alabama, says the historian of that State, the party always slept in the woods, near swamps of reeds, upon which the horses, "belled and hobbled," fed during the night. "After breakfast, it was their custom again to mount their horses and march on, with a silence which was sometimes broken by a remark about the weather, the creeks, or the Indians. Burr sat firmly in the saddle, was always on the alert, and was a most excellent rider. Although drenched for hours with cold and clammy rain, and at night extended upon a thin pallet, on the bare ground, after having accomplished a ride of forty miles, yet, in the whole distance to Richmond, this remarkable man was never heard to complain that he was sick, or even fatigued."

It was ten days before they reached again the abodes of the white man. Occasionally, as they approached the settlements, they would find an Indian in possession of a crossing place on a river, with canoes for the conveyance of travelers. Then, they would place their stores in the canoes, and paddle over,

leading their swimming horses. The first roof that sheltered the party was that of a small tavern, near Fort Wilkinson, on the river Oconee, about eighty miles from the boundary line between Georgia and South Carolina. The arrival of so extraordinary a party at this remote place of entertainment seems to have astonished the landlord. While breakfast was getting ready, and the guard and their prisoner were sitting quietly around the fire, he began to ask them a series of extremely disagreeable questions. Learning that they came from the Tombigbee settlement, he hit at once upon the prevailing topic, and asked the news respecting Aaron Burr, the traitor! Had he yet been arrested? Was he not a very bad man? Was not every body afraid of him? To these and other questions of the kind, Perkins and his men could make no reply, but hung down their heads in extreme embarrassment, full of sympathy for their captive. Burr, who was sitting in a corner near the fire, raised his head, and, fixing his blazing eyes upon the unsuspecting landlord, said,

"I am Aaron Burr — what is it you want with me?"

The poor landlord, amazed at the information, and struck with the majestic manner of the man, stood aghast, and, without a syllable of reply, glided about the house, offering the party the most obsequious attentions.

Two days more brought them to the confines of South Carolina, where Burr from of old had been a popular favorite, and where, on his visits to Theodosia, he had ever been warmly welcomed, and made many personal friends. Perkins knew the difficulty he should have in conveying, with such a force as his, a prisoner like Burr through that State, and he exhorted his men to renewed vigilance. By keeping well to the north, he avoided the larger settlements until he reached the district of Chester, which was only one day's march from North Carolina. As he approached the principal village of this district, he halted the party, and changed the order of their march, placing two men in front of the prisoner, two more behind, and one at each side of him. In this manner they proceeded, without incident, until they passed near a tavern, before which a considerable number of persons were

standing, while music and dancing were heard from within. Here, Burr threw himself from his horse, and exclaimed in a loud voice,

"I am Aaron Burr, under military arrest, and claim the protection of the civil authorities."

Perkins snatched his pistols from his holster, sprang to the ground, and in an instant was at the side of his prisoner. With a pistol in each hand, he sternly ordered him to remount.

"*I will not!*" shouted Burr in his most defiant manner.

Perkins, unwilling to shed blood, but resolute to execute the commission intrusted to him, threw his pistols upon the ground, caught the prisoner round the waist with the resistless grasp of a frontiersman, and threw him into the saddle. One of the guard seizing the bridle of Burr's horse, led him rapidly away, and the whole party swept through the village in a mass, and disappeared, before the group of spectators had recovered from their astonishment at the scene.

A mile or two beyond the village, Perkins halted the party to consult with his comrades. Burr was wild with excitement. The indifference of the people, the personal indignity he had suffered, the thought of his innocence of any violation of the law, the triumph his enemies were about to have over him, all rushed upon his mind, and, for a minute, unmanned him. Perkins used to say that, when the party halted, he found his prisoner in a flood of tears, and that the man who led his horse, touched by the spectacle of fallen greatness, was also crying. It may have been so. Never had mortal man to endure more of what is called *mortification* than Aaron Burr at that moment; and if, for an instant, he lost that amazing self-command which he exhibited all through his unexampled misfortunes, it was pardonable, and it was but once.

After conversing with his men, Perkins sent them forward with the prisoner, under the command of his lieutenant, and returned himself to Chester, where he bought a gig, and rejoined the party before night. Burr was then transferred to the vehicle, with one of the guard to drive, and, in that manner, traveled the remainder of the distance. At Frederics-

burg, Perkins was met by orders from Washington to convey the prisoner to Richmond, where the party arrived on the 26th of March. They had accomplished the journey in the remarkably short period of twenty-one days. Arriving on the evening of Thursday, the prisoner was taken to the Eagle Tavern, where he remained, under guard, until Monday morning.

The morning after his arrival, he wrote a short note to his daughter, announcing the fact. "It seems," he added, "that here the business is to be tried and concluded. I am to be surrendered to the civil authority to-morrow, when the question of bail is to be determined. In the mean time, I remain at the Eagle Tavern."

A letter which he wrote to her some days after is worthy of note. It was long a puzzle in my mind, whether the following passage was written in joke or earnest. It was undoubtedly written in earnest. He really felt *just so* respecting his own character and conduct: "You have read to very little purpose if you have not remarked that such things happen in all democratic governments. Was there in Greece or Rome a man of virtue and independence, and supposed to possess great talents, who was not the object of vindictive and unrelenting persecution? Now, madame, I pray you to amuse yourself by collecting and collating all the instances to be found in ancient history, which you may connect together, if you please, in an essay, with reflections, comments, and applications. * * * I promise myself great pleasure in the perusal, and I promise you great satisfaction and consolation in the composition."

Theodosia, as may be imagined, was overwhelmed by this new calamity. How fondly she had indulged in the dream that her father's misfortunes were at an end, and that she should see him the glorious and powerful head of a nation created by his own genius! Or, if not that, yet the leading spirit of a prosperous and refined community, of which she, too, should be a member! For many days, she forgot her father's countless exhortations to fortitude, and remained stupefied with sorrow. She recovered her serenity, ere long, and had then

no thought but to fly to Richmond to be at his side during the scenes that were before him. In a few weeks she and her husband began their melancholy journey northward.

On Monday, Major Scott, the marshal of the district, attended by two deputies, waited upon the prisoner, and, with the utmost respectfulness of manner, conducted him, "through an awfully silent and attentive assemblage of citizens," to another apartment of the hotel, where he was brought before Chief Justice Marshall for examination. This examination was merely preliminary to commitment, which was strenuously opposed by Burr and his counsel.

In a brief but forcible speech, Colonel Burr denied that there was the smallest ground for even an accusation against him. The country, he said, had been causelessly alarmed. Wilkinson had alarmed the President, and the President had alarmed the country. He appealed to facts which were known to all; to the history of his arrangements in the West; to the promptness with which he had met every charge; and to the unanimity with which juries had acquitted him. If there had been any cause of alarm, it must have been known to the people in that part of the country where his offense was said to have been committed. The manner of his descent of the river was proof enough that his object was purely peaceable and agricultural. He declared that all his designs were honorable, and calculated to be beneficial to the United States. His flight, as it was termed, had been mentioned as a proof of guilt; but it was only from the resistless arm of military despotism that he had fled. Was it his duty to remain surrounded by armed men assembled for his unlawful capture? He thought not. He took the advice of his best friends, pursued the dictates of his own judgment, and abandoned a country where the laws had ceased to be the sovereign power. The charge stated in a handbill, that he had forfeited his recognizance, was false. He had forfeited no recognizance. If he had forfeited any recognizance, why had no proceedings taken place for the breach of it? If he was to be prosecuted for such breach, he wished to know why he was brought to this place? Why not carry him to the place where the

breach happened? More than three months had elapsed since the order of government had issued to seize and bring him to that place; yet it was pretended, that sufficient time had not been allowed to adduce testimony in support of the prosecution. He asked why the guard, who conducted him to that place, avoided every magistrate on the way, unless from a conviction that they were acting without lawful authority? Why had he been debarred the use of pen and ink, and paper, and not even permitted to write to his daughter? In the State of South Carolina, where he happened to see three men together, he demanded the interposition of the civil authority; it was from military despotism, from the tyranny of a military escort, that he wished to be delivered, not from an investigation into his conduct, or from the operation of the laws of his country.

After an argument of three days' duration, the Chief Justice decided to commit the prisoner on the charge of misdemeanor only, leaving the charge of treason to be investigated by the grand jury. By this decision Colonel Burr was freed from the immediate apprehension of imprisonment. Five gentlemen of Richmond gave bonds in the sum of ten thousand dollars for the appearance of the prisoner at the next circuit court of the United States, to be held at Richmond on the 22d of May. He was then discharged from custody.

Innocent as he was of the slightest infraction of the law, he now saw that it was necessary to prepare for an arduous conflict in the court. It was not merely that the deposition of Eaton and the dispatches of Wilkinson had turned the tide of public opinion so strongly against him, that an unbiased jury could not be found in all Virginia. The serious circumstance was, that the President, by his proclamations and by his messages to Congress, had conspicuously committed himself to the opinion of Burr's guilt. He had so frightened the country from its propriety, that to escape being overwhelmed with ridicule, he must get his prisoner convicted of the fell designs which he had publicly attributed to him. Not that Jefferson had the least doubt of Burr's guilt. His familiar letters written in the spring of 1807, show that he implicitly believed the

story he had told the people. "Burr's enterprise," wrote Jefferson, January 11th, "is the most extraordinary since the days of Don Quixote. It is so extravagant that those who know his understanding would not believe it if the proofs admitted doubt. He has meant to place himself on the throne of Montezuma, and extend his empire to the Alleghany, seizing on New Orleans as the instrument of compulsion for our western States."

How nonsensical is this! What impossibilities does this closet-wise man attribute to his late companion and rival! By what means imaginable could the western States be *compelled* to yield submission to a usurper at New Orleans? The States of this Union are so constituted and circumstanced, that treason of the kind attributed to Aaron Burr is a simple and manifest impossibility! There is no part of Jefferson's long and glorious career in which he appears to so little advantage as during the period we are now considering. His mind was absurdly excited. One of his letters to Senator Giles, written a few days after Burr's first examination at Richmond, speaks of the *tricks* of the judges in hastening the trial so as to clear Burr; rails at the Federalists, saying that they were *disappointed* at Burr's failure to rend the Union. If, said he, Burr had succeeded ever so partially, the Federalists were ready to join him in the attempt to overthrow "this hated republic," and introduce "their favorite monarchy." At first, he adds, the Federalists accused the President of permitting "treason to stalk through the land in open day;" but *now*, they complain because he crushed it before it had ripened to an overt act. "As if an express could go to Natchez, or to the mouth of the Cumberland, and return, in five weeks, to do which has never taken less than twelve." He proceeds to denounce the federal judges, of whom John Marshall was the chief, in a manner which shows that philosophers are sometimes angry, and that sages are not always wise. He wrote also to Governor Pinckney of South Carolina, telling him that Alston was implicated with Burr, had traveled, solicited, endorsed for Burr; and inquiring whether it would be advisable to take any measures against him. In one word, the real prosecutor of Aaron

Burr, throughout this business, was Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States, who was made President of the United States by Aaron Burr's tact and vigilance, and who was able therefore to wield against Aaron Burr the power and resources of the United States.

It was not without truth, then, that Colonel Burr wrote in the early stages of the trial: "The most indefatigable industry is used by the agents of government, and they have money at command without stint. If I were possessed of the same means, I could not only foil the prosecutors, but render them ridiculous and infamous. The democratic papers teem with abuse against me and my counsel, and even against the Chief Justice. Nothing is left undone or unsaid which can tend to prejudice the public mind, and produce a conviction without evidence. The machinations of this description which were used against Moreau in France were treated in this country with indignation. They are practiced against me in a still more impudent degree, not only with impunity, but with applause; and the authors and abettors suppose, with reason, that they are acquiring favor with the administration."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE INDICTMENT.

The Concourse at Richmond — General Jackson Denounces Jefferson — Winfield Scott in the Court-room — The Lawyers — George Hay — William Wirt — MacRae — Burr's Manner and Appearance in Court — Edmund Randolph — William Wickham — Luther Martin — Benjamin Botts — Jack Baker — The Grand Jury — Motion to Commit — The Argument — Wirt's Speech — Burr's Reply — Waiting for Wilkinson — Treason Defined — The Subpœna Duces Tecum — Indictments Found — Burr in Prison — Theodosia's Arrival — Barney's Recollections.

The court convened on the appointed day, May 22d, 1807. Richmond, itself a city of six thousand inhabitants, and the social metropolis of Virginia, was thronged with strangers — all eager to witness the opening scenes of a trial more remarkable than any which had yet taken place in the infant republic. Besides the magnates of Virginia, General Jackson was there, full of wrath against the administration for its persecution of his innocent friend, the prisoner. The story that Colonel Burr, in his later years, used often to tell of General Jackson's mounting the steps of a corner grocery at Richmond, and declaiming furiously against Jefferson for the part he had taken in crushing the expedition and its author, is confirmed by the testimony of the most distinguished of the living public men of the United States. "As I was crossing the court-house green," said this gentleman to the writer, "I heard a great noise of haranguing at some distance off. Inquiring what it was, I was told it was a great blackguard from Tennessee, one Andrew Jackson, making a speech for Burr, and damning Jefferson as a persecutor." Besides Jackson, there were a number of Burr's friends from New York, and a host of persons from the West who had been his confederates, and who were now summoned as witnesses against him. Includ-

ing witnesses, jurymen, and lawyers, there were not less than two hundred persons in Richmond who had some official connection with the trial.

The struggles for admission to the hall were terrible. So great was the number of distinguished persons claiming seats within the bar, that lawyers of twenty years' standing were excluded from their accustomed places, and thought themselves fortunate to get within the walls. John Randolph, Senator Giles, and many other public men, were present. Among the young gentlemen of the town who had succeeded in forcing their way into the room was Winfield Scott, then just admitted to the bar. He stood on the massive lock of the great door, above the crowd, in full view of the prisoner, who observed and long remembered the towering form of the most magnificent youth in Virginia.

Two judges sat upon the bench, John Marshall, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and Cyrus Griffin, Judge of the District of Virginia. The Chief Justice, in his fifty-second year (one year older than the prisoner), was a tall, slender man, with a majestic head, without one gray hair, with eyes the finest ever seen, except Burr's, large, black, and brilliant beyond description. It was often remarked during the trial, that two such pairs of eyes had never looked into one another before. The soul of dignity and honor, prudent, courageous, alive to censure, but immovably resolute to do right, John Marshall was the Washington of the bench. Not a brilliant man, not a great man, but an honest man, and a just judge. Jefferson, with his strange convictions of Burr's guilt, could not, and never could, comprehend the decisions of the Chief Justice upon this trial. He so far forgot himself as to insinuate that party feelings influenced those decisions of the Chief Justice; as though John Marshall, the Federalist, could be biased *in favor* of the man who had deprived his party of its chief, and himself of an honored and valued friend! Gentlemen of the profession who witnessed the trial, who saw the effective dignity with which the judge presided over the court, who heard him read those opinions, so elaborate and right, though necessarily prepared on the spur of

the moment, regarded it as the finest display of judicial skill and judicial rectitude which they had ever beheld.

The counsel employed in the case comprised the ablest men of the bar of Virginia, with one powerful recruit from Maryland. First in technical rank, but neither first nor second in ability, was George Hay, the prosecuting attorney. He was Colonel Monroe's son-in-law; a warm Jeffersonian; much addicted to the production of those long-winded political disquisitions of which the readers of that age were so fond; a most respectable and zealous man, but, on this occasion, "overweighted." He did his best with an impossible cause, against five of the ablest lawyers of the day; but, with the aid of almost daily letters from Jefferson, teeming with suggestions for the conduct of the case, he showed incompetence at every stage of the proceedings. He was assisted by William Wirt, then only thirty-five years of age, just rising into eminence, but greatly and justly admired at the Richmond bar for his splendid declamation. Among the lawyers assembled that day within the bar, there was not one whose rising to speak so instantaneously hushed the spectators to silence as his. A handsome, fortunate, happy, brilliant, high-minded man was William Wirt, the toil of whose life-time it was to achieve those solid attainments which alone make brilliancy of utterance endurable in a court of justice. At the personal request of Jefferson himself, Mr. Wirt undertook to aid the prosecution, and he did it yeoman's service. Alexander MacRae, the third on the side of the government, was the son of a Scotch parson who was distinguished in the revolutionary war, first, for being himself a hot Tory, and, secondly, for being the father of seven sons, all of whom were ardent Whigs. MacRae was a lawyer of respectable ability and a sharp tongue — sharp from ill-nature more than wit. At the time of the trial he was Lieutenant-Governor of Virginia.

On the other side, the array of celebrity and talent was imposing in the extreme. The real leader of the defense was Burr himself, though the burden of the work fell upon others. Not a step was taken, not a point conceded, without his express concurrence. He appeared in court attired with scru-

pulous neatness, in black, with powdered hair and queue. His manner was dignity itself — composed, polite, confident, impressive. He had the air of a man at perfect peace with himself, and simply intent upon the business of the scene. It was observed that he never laughed at the jokes of the counsel, which, at some stages of the trial, were numerous and good. His speeches were short, concise, exact. They were uttered with such impressive distinctness that there are men now alive, who, after the lapse of fifty years, can repeat phrases and sentences which they heard fall from his lips during the trial. He was at home again. He was handling familiar weapons. The valley of the Mississippi was too much for him; but in a court of justice, with the law all on his side, with a judge who would decide according to law, and with such opponents as Hay, Wirt, and MacRae, he was master of the situation.

He had four assistants, each of whom were preëminent at the bar for some one qualification, or set of qualifications, calculated to be of service in the defense. Edmund Randolph, (second cousin of John Randolph) was the leader on Burr's side. He had been Attorney-General and Secretary of State under Washington; he had been Governor and Attorney General of Virginia; he was an elderly man of great experience, much learning, some talent, and over-awing dignity of manner. John Wickham, another of Burr's defenders, was perhaps, upon the whole, the ablest lawyer then practicing at the Richmond bar. He had learning, logic, wit, sarcasm, eloquence, a fine presence, and a persuasive manner. In single endowments he was excelled, but no other man possessed such a variety of talents and resources as Wickham. Another great man on Burr's side was Luther Martin, of Maryland, who, in the single particular of legal learning, was the first lawyer of his day. His memory was as wonderful as his reading, so that his acquirements were at instantaneous command. Burr had become acquainted with him at Washington three years before, during the trial of Judge Chace, in whose defense Martin had greatly distinguished himself. He entered into the defense of Colonel Burr with a zeal which Jefferson

thought so indecent and outrageous, that he could only account for it on the supposition that Martin was implicated with Burr. He was, indeed, a somewhat coarse man, more loud than eloquent, and a mighty drinker; resembling, in many respects, Professor Porson, the capacious Oxford receptacle of Greek and wine. Another of Burr's counsel was Benjamin Botts (father of the well-known John Minor Botts, of Virginia). Mr. Botts was the youngest man on the side of the defense, but already eminent. His speciality was courage, nerve; the "bravest of all possible men," I have heard him described by a cotemporary. There was also a certain "Jack Baker," a lame man with a crutch, a merry fellow with plenty of "horse-wit" and an infectious laugh, no speaker and no lawyer, but the best of good fellows — who appeared at a later period of the trial as counsel for one of the accused.

The report of the trial, of which a brief account is now to be given, fills more than eleven hundred closely-printed octavo pages, and, of course, only the leading points, and the most interesting scenes can be given in the few pages that are appropriated to the subject in this volume.

The court was opened at half-past twelve. The very first proceedings showed how general and how decided was the conviction of the prisoner's guilt. The gentlemen who had been summoned to serve on the grand jury, upon being questioned, all admitted that the proclamations of the President, and the deposition of General Eaton, had given them strong impressions against the prisoner. One of them was Senator Giles, who had moved in the Senate the suspension of the Habeas Corpus; another was an old political and personal enemy of Burr's; and all were prepared to believe him a traitor. One of the jurymen even volunteered the statement that, upon reading Eaton's deposition in the newspapers, he had expressed himself with great warmth and indignation upon the subject, and, therefore, feeling that it would be indelicate and improper for him to serve on the grand jury, begged to be excused.

Colonel Burr said: "Under different circumstances I might think and act differently; but the industry which has been

used through this country to prejudice my cause, leaves me very little chance indeed of an impartial jury. There is very little chance that I can expect a better man to try my cause. His desire to be excused, and his opinion that his mind is not entirely free upon the case, are good reasons why he should be excused; but the candor of the gentleman, in excepting to himself, leaves me ground to hope that he will endeavor to be impartial. I pray the court to notice, from the scene before us, how many attempts have been made to prejudge my cause. On this occasion I am perfectly passive."

This gentleman was, accordingly, not excused. To Mr. Giles and a few others of the *most* prejudiced among the panel, Colonel Burr objected, and they were withdrawn. The celebrated John Randolph, being added to the panel from among the spectators, begged to be excused for the same reason, namely, that he had an impression that the prisoner was guilty of the crimes charged against him. He was retained, however, and named foreman of the jury. Late in the afternoon the requisite number of jurors was obtained, and, having been duly sworn and charged, were conducted to the apartment prepared for them.

Colonel Burr then addressed the court, and, in doing so, gave an intimation of the mode in which he had resolved to conduct the defense, and in which he did conduct it from first to last. He asked the court to instruct the grand jury as to the *admissibility* of certain evidence which, he supposed, would be laid before them. Mr. Hay objected, and hoped the court would grant no special indulgences to Colonel Burr, who stood on the same footing with every other man who had committed a crime. "Would to God," exclaimed the prisoner, "that I did stand on the same footing with every other man! This is the first time I have been permitted to enjoy the rights of a citizen. How have I been brought hither?"

The Chief Justice interposed, observing that such digressions were improper. The day being far spent, it was agreed that argument respecting the duty of the court to instruct the grand jury further, should be postponed. The court then adjourned to the following morning; the multitude dispersed

and the prisoner, accompanied by his counsel, returned to his lodgings.

Second Day (Saturday). — Nothing was done except recognizing some newly-arrived witnesses. No witnesses were sent in to the grand jury. It now appeared that nothing effectual could be done until the arrival of General Wilkinson, who had been summoned, and was daily expected. It was thought by some that he would not dare to confront the man he was supposed to have betrayed; and meanwhile, the questions of the day at Richmond were, Has Wilkinson arrived? Has Wilkinson been heard from? What *can* have become of Wilkinson? Wilkinson was the great Expected — the Coming Man.

Third Day. — Mr. Hay was compelled again to announce that he had received no tidings of the general. He made an important motion, however, which excited one of the most eloquent debates of the whole trial. The prisoner, as the reader has been informed, was held to bail, on his first examination, merely on the charge of *misdemeanor*, in having incited a hostile attempt against a nation with which the United States were at peace. To-day, the prosecuting attorney moved the court that he be committed on the charge of high treason! "On his examination," said the attorney, "there was no evidence of an *overt act*, and he was committed for a misdemeanor only. The evidence is different now." The effect of this motion, if granted, would be the immediate introduction of *vivâ voce* evidence, and the commitment of the prisoner to jail, if the judge should deem the evidence sufficient to warrant it. It was a home-thrust, and the defense summoned all its energies to parry it.

Mr. Botts denounced the motion as a violation of an agreement which had been made between the opposing counsel, that each side should give the other notice of motions intended to be made. The counsel for the defense had not been notified of the present motion. "The fact is this," replied Mr. Hay, "Mr. Wilkinson is known to be a material witness in this prosecution; his arrival in Virginia might be announced in this city before he himself reached it. I do not pretend to

say what effect it might produce upon Colonel Burr's mind; but certainly Colonel Burr would be able to effect his escape, merely upon paying the recognizance of his present bail. My only object then was to keep his person safe, until we could have investigated the charge of treason; and I really did not know but that, if Colonel Burr had been previously apprised of my motion, he might have attempted to avoid it. But I did not promise to make this communication to the opposite counsel, because it might have defeated the very end for which it was intended."

Mr. Wickham, Mr. Randolph, and Mr. Botts were positive and vehement in opposing the motion, as unprecedented, unlawful, unjust, and cruel. Colonel Burr, they said, was in court, ready to go on with the investigation. The prosecution had had months to prepare their case, and to assemble their witnesses; and still they were not ready. They desired to waive the prosecution, and institute, in its stead, an oppressive inquisition, against which the prisoner would have no means of defense.

In reply to these gentlemen, Mr Wirt, for the first time, addressed the court, and spoke with remarkable fluency and animation. That he believed Colonel Burr a guilty man, is shown by the harshness of his manner whenever, throughout the trial, he had occasion to refer directly to him.

"Where is the crime," said Mr. Wirt, "of considering Aaron Burr as subject to the ordinary operation of the human passions? Toward any other man, it seems, the attorney would have been justifiable in using precautions against alarms and escapes: it is only improper when applied to this man. Really, sir, I recollect nothing in the history of his deportment, which renders it so very incredible that Aaron Burr would fly from a prosecution.

"Sir, if Aaron Burr be innocent, instead of resisting this motion, he ought to hail it with triumph and exultation. What is it that we propose to introduce? Not the rumors that are floating through the world, nor the *bulk* of the multitude, nor the speculations of newspapers: but the *evidence of facts.* We propose that the whole evidence, exculpatory as

well as accusative, shall come before you; instead of exciting, this is the true mode of correcting prejudices. The world, which it is said has been misled and inflamed by falsehood, will now hear the truth. Let the truth come out, let us know how much of what we have heard is false, how much of it is true; how much of what we feel is prejudice, how much of it is justified by fact. Whoever before heard of such an apprehension as that which is professed on the other side? *Prejudice excited by evidence!* Evidence, sir, is the great corrector of prejudice. Why then does Aaron Burr shrink from it? It is strange to me that a man, who complains so much of being, without cause, illegally seized and transported by a military officer, should be afraid to confront this evidence. Evidence can be promotive only of truth. I repeat it then, sir, why does he shrink from the evidence? The gentlemen on the other side can give the answer. On our part, we are ready to produce that evidence.

"The gentleman assures us that no imputation is meant against the government. Oh, no, sir; Colonel Burr indeed has been oppressed, has been persecuted; but far be it from the gentleman to charge the government with it. Colonel Burr indeed has been harassed by a military tyrant, who is 'the instrument of a government bound to a blind obedience;' but the gentleman could not by any means be understood as intending to insinuate aught to the prejudice of the government. The gentleman is understood, sir; his object is correctly understood. He would divert the public attention from Aaron Burr, and point it to another quarter. He would, too, if he could, shift the popular displeasure which he has spoken of, from Aaron Burr to another quarter. These remarks were not intended for your ear, sir; they were intended for the people who surround us; they can have no effect upon the mind of the court. I am too well acquainted with the dignity, the firmness, the illumination of this bench, to apprehend any such consequence. But the gentlemen would balance the account of popular prejudices; they would convert this judicial into a political question; they would make it a question between Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr. The

purpose is well understood, sir; but it shall not be served. I will not degrade the administration of this country by entering on their defense. Besides, sir, this is not our business; at present we have an account to settle, not between Aaron Burr and Thomas Jefferson, but between Aaron Burr and the laws of his country. Let us finish his trial first. The administration, too, will be tried before their country; before the world. They, sir, I believe, will never shrink, either from the evidence or the verdict.

"Why is not General Wilkinson here? The *certainty* that Aaron Burr would be put upon his trial, could not have been known at Washington till the 5th or 6th of April. Now, sir, let the gentlemen on the other side make a slight calculation. Orleans is said to be fifteen hundred or sixteen hundred miles from this place. Suppose the United States mail, traveling by a frequent change of horses and riders, a hundred miles per day, should reach Orleans in seventeen days from the federal city, it would be the 24th or 25th of April (putting all accidents out of the question) before General Wilkinson could have received his orders to come on. Since that time until this, he has had thirty days to reach Richmond. Could a journey of fifteen hundred or sixteen hundred miles be reasonably performed in thirty days? Who can bear a journey of fifty miles per day for thirty days together."

Mr. Hay followed in an elaborate speech. To him, as to Mr. Wirt, the counsel for the defense, replied, and Colonel Burr concluded the debate in a ten minutes' speech. He declared himself, not only willing, but anxious to proceed — but *not* to proceed in the way proposed. On a motion for commitment, *ex parte* evidence alone would be introduced, and he would not submit to go on at such disadvantage, when the result involved such consequences to himself. "My counsel," said he, "have been charged with declamation against the government of the United States. I certainly, sir, shall not be charged with declamation; but surely it is an established principle, that no government is so high as to be beyond the reach of criticism; and it is particularly laid down, that this vigilance is more peculiarly necessary, when any government

institutes a prosecution; and one reason is, on account of the vast disproportion of means which exists between it and the accused. But, if ever there was a case which justified this vigilance, it is certainly the present one, when the government has displayed such uncommon activity. If, then, this government has been so peculiarly active against me, it is not improper to make the assertion here, for the purpose of increasing the circumspection of the court."

He observed, that he meant by persecution, the harassing of any individual, contrary to the forms of law; and that his case, unfortunately, presented too many instances of this description. His friends had been everywhere seized by the military authority; a practice truly consonant with European despotism. Persons had been dragged by compulsory process before particular tribunals, and compelled to give testimony against him. His papers, too, had been seized. And yet, in England, where we say they know nothing of liberty, a gentleman who had been seized and detained two hours in a back parlor, had obtained damages to the amount of one thousand guineas. He said that an order had been issued to kill him, as he was descending the Mississippi, and seize his property. And yet, they could only have killed his person if he had been formally condemned for treason. Even post-offices had been broken open, and robbed of his papers, in the Mississippi Territory; even an indictment was about to be laid against the postmaster. He had always taken this for a felony; but nothing seemed too extravagant to be forgiven by the amiable morality of this government. "All this," said Colonel Burr, "may only prove that my case is a solitary exception from the general rule; that government may be tender mild, and humane, to every one but me. If so, to be sure it is of little consequence to any body but myself. But surely I may be excused if I complain a little of such proceedings." There seemed to be something mingled in those proceedings, which manifested a more than usual inclination to attain the ends of justice.

"Our President is a lawyer, and a great one too. He certainly ought to know what it is that constitutes a war. Six

months ago he proclaimed that there was a civil war. And yet, for six months have they been hunting for it, and still can not find one spot where it existed. There was, to be sure, a most terrible war in the newspapers; but no where else. When I appeared before the grand jury, in Kentucky, they had no charge to bring against me, and I was consequently dismissed. When I appeared for a second time, before a grand jury in the Mississippi Territory, there was nothing to appear against me; and the judge even told the United States Attorney, that if he did not send up his bill before the grand jury, he himself would proceed to name as many of the witnesses as he could, and bring it before the court. Still there was no proof of war. At length, however, the Spaniards invaded our territory, and yet, there was no war. But, sir, if there was a war, certainly no man can pretend to say that the government is able to find it out. The scene to which they have now hunted it, is only three hundred miles distant, and still there is no evidence to prove this war."

He concluded by reminding the judge, that if he should then be committed to prison, he would be obliged by law to remain there until the next term of the court, which would involve a delay of six months. The argument then rested, and the court adjourned for the day.

Fourth Day. — The Chief Justice decided, with avowed reluctance, that "if it was the choice of the prosecuting attorney to proceed with the motion" he might open his testimony; but "the court perceives and regrets that the result of this motion may be publications unfavorable to the justice and to the right decision of the case." Mr. Hay then said that he was struck with the observation of the court respecting "publications," and he was willing to enter into negotiations with the counselor for the defense with a view to avoid that "inconvenience;" that is to say, if they would consent to an amount of bail sufficiently large to insure the prisoner's appearance, he would forbear to avail himself of the decision just rendered. Colonel Burr's counsel demanding time for reflection, the court adjourned.

Fifth Day. — Mr. Hay said he had received a letter from

the counsel for the defense, positively refusing to give additional bail. He deemed it his duty, therefore, to go on with the examination of witnesses, for the purpose of securing the commitment of Colonel Burr on the charge of treason.

Now arose, as might have been foreseen, the vital question, *what evidence was admissible?*

A field-day of argument ensued, in the course of which Mr. Botts, in a manner plain to the comprehension of non-legal auditors, stated the law of the United States respecting the crime of high treason. First, he said, it must be proved that there was an actual war; a war consisting of *acts*, not of intentions. "In England," said Mr. Botts, "where conspiring the death of the king was treason, the *quo animo* formed the essence of the offense; but in America the national convention has confined treason to the act. We can not have a constructive war within the meaning of the Constitution. An intention to levy war, is not evidence that a war was levied. Intentions are always mutable and variable; the continuance of guilty intentions is not to be presumed." Secondly, the war must not only have been levied, but the prisoner must be proved to have committed an overt (open, not *covert*) act of treason in that war. "A treasonable intention to coöperate is no evidence of an actual coöperation. The act of others, even if in pursuance of his plan, would be no evidence against him. It might not be necessary that he should be present, perhaps; he must be, at the time of levying the war, coöperating by acts, or, in the language of the Constitution, be committing overt acts." Thirdly, the overt act by the accused, in an actual war, must be proved to have been committed within the district in which the trial takes place. Fourthly, the overt act must be proved by two witnesses.

The court sustained this view of the crime of treason, and refused to hear evidence of treasonable intention, until it was first proved that an *overt act* of treason had been committed. Just as in a case of murder, the fact of the *killing* must be shown before other evidence has any relevancy. That the counsel for the prosecution were mortified and perplexed by this decision, they took no pains to conceal. They appeared to

have drawn up their list of witnesses in the historical order; intending, first, to show the state of the prisoner's mind when the alleged treason was conceived, and then to narrate its progressive development in the order in which the events were supposed to have occurred. The decision, besides excluding all their choicest morsels of evidence, disarranged this commodious scheme.

Two of Blennerhassett's servants were examined respecting the events that took place on the island; an affidavit from New Orleans was offered as evidence, but rejected; and then, without having made the slightest progress, the court adjourned.

Sixth Day.— Luther Martin appeared, and took his place among Colonel Burr's counsel. The prosecuting attorney being convinced, to-day, of the futility of his efforts to commit the prisoner at the present stage of the case, and the Chief Justice having expressed a strong desire that "the personal appearance of Colonel Burr could be secured without the necessity of proceeding with this inquiry," Colonel Burr agreed to give bail, "provided it should be understood that no opinion, on the question even of probable cause, was pronounced by the court by the circumstance of his giving bail." This was agreed to, and the bail was doubled. One of the new sureties was Luther Martin, who declared in open court that he was happy to have this opportunity to give a public proof of his confidence in the honor of Colonel Burr, and of his conviction that he was innocent.

Days passed, and still there were no tidings of the portly Wilkinson. Here were nine of the ablest lawyers of the country, however, and the eyes of an excited nation were fixed upon them. Need it be said that there were motion enough, and talk interminable! There was talk desultory talk animated, talk violent, talk to the purpose, and talk digressive. Martin roared against the administration, like the "Federal bull-dog" that he was; and Wirt retorted in polished and glowing declamation. Wickham, Botts, and Randolph went, by turns, into the arena, and won the applause of the bar and the crowd. One of the longest arguments was

upon a motion made by Burr, that the court issue a *subpœna duces tecum* to the President, requiring him to furnish certain papers to the counsel for the defense, namely, Wilkinson's letter to the President, dated October 21st, and the orders issued by the government to the army and navy during the late excitement. These papers (copies, of course) had been applied for by Colonel Burr himself during a recent visit to Washington. They were refused. His counsel had since applied, but they had not been obtained.

The letter applied for was the one in which Wilkinson said he did not know who the prime mover of the conspiracy was, and the orders to the army and navy were such as, in the counsels' opinion, would have *justified resistance* on the part of Colonel Burr and his companions.

"We intended to show," said Luther Martin, "in one of his vehement harangues, "that these orders were contrary to the Constitution and the laws, and that they entitled Colonel Burr to the right of resistance. We intended to show that by this particular order his property and his person were to be destroyed; yes, by these tyrannical orders the life and property of an innocent man were to be exposed to destruction. We did not expect the originals themselves. But we did apply for copies; and were refused under presidential influence. In New York, on the farcical trials of Ogden and Smith, the officers of the government screened themselves from attending, under the sanction of the President's name. Perhaps the same farce may be repeated here; and it is for this reason that we apply directly to the President of the United States. Whether it would have been best to have applied to the Secretaries of State, of the Navy and War, I can not say. All that we want is, the copies of some papers, and the original of another. This is a peculiar case, sir. The President has underatken to prejudge my client by declaring, that 'of his guilt there can be no doubt.' He has assumed to himself the knowledge of the Supreme Being himself, and pretended to search the heart of my highly respected friend. He has proclaimed him a traitor in the face of that country which has rewarded him. He has let slip the dogs of war, the

hell-hounds of persecution, to hunt down my friend. And would this President of the United States, who has raised all this absurd clamor, pretend to keep back the papers which are wanted for this trial, where life itself is at stake? It is a sacred principle, that in all such cases, the accused has a right to all the evidence which is necessary for his defense. And whoever withholds, willfully, information that would save the life of a person charged with a capital offense, is substantially a murderer, and so recorded in the register of heaven."

To which Mr. Wirt replied: "I beg to know what gentlemen can intend, expect, or hope, from these perpetual philippics against the government? Do they flatter themselves that this court feels political prejudices which will supply the place of argument and innocence on the part of the prisoner? Their conduct amounts to an insinuation of the sort. But I do not believe it. On the contrary, I feel the firm and pleasing assurance, that as to the court, the beam of their judgment will remain steady, although the earth itself should shake under the concussion of prejudice. Or is it on the by-standers that the gentlemen expect to make a favorable impression? And do they use the court merely as a canal, through which they may pour upon the world their undeserved invectives against the government? Do they wish to divide the popular resentment and diminish thereby their own quota? Before the gentlemen arraign the administration, let them clear the skirts of their client. Let them prove his innocence; let them prove that he has not covered himself with the clouds of mystery and just suspicion; let them prove that he has been all along erect and fair, in open day, and that these charges against him are totally groundless and false. That will be the most eloquent invective which they can pronounce against the prosecution; but until they prove this innocence, it shall be in vain that they attempt to divert our minds to other objects, and other inquiries. We will keep our eyes on Aaron Burr until he satisfies our utmost scruple. I beg to know, sir, if the course which gentlemen pursue is not disrespectful to the court itself? Suppose there are any foreigners here accustomed to regular government in their own country, what can

they infer from hearing the federal administration thus reviled to the federal judiciary? Hearing the judiciary told that the administration are "*blood hounds*, hunting this man with a keen and savage thirst for blood; that they now suppose they have hunted him into their toils, and have him safe.' Sir, no man, foreigner or citizen, who hears this language addressed to the court, and received with all the complacency at least which silence can imply, can make any inferences from it very honorable to the court. It would only be inferred, while they are thus suffered to roll and luxuriate in these gross invectives against the administration, that they are furnishing the joys of a Mohammedan paradise to the court as well as to their client. I hope that the court, for their own sakes, will compel a decent respect to that government of which they themselves form a branch. On our part, we wish only a fair trial of this case. If the man be innocent, in the name of God let him go; but while we are on the question of his guilt or innocence, let us not suffer our attention and judgment to be diverted and distracted by the introduction of other subjects foreign to the inquiry."

After some days of debate, the Chief Justice gave a very elaborate opinion on the point, and decided that the *subpœna duces tecum* might issue.

If the object of this motion was to annoy the President, it certainly accomplished its purpose completely. Mr. Jefferson was disgusted with the motion, disgusted with the debate, and disgusted with the decision. "Shall we move," he wrote to Mr. Hay, "to commit Luther Martin as *particeps criminis* with Burr? Grayball will fix upon him misprision of treason at least, and, at any rate, his evidence will put down this unprincipled and impudent Federal bull-dog, and add another proof that the most clamorous defenders of Burr are all his accomplices. It will explain why Luther Martin flew so hastily to the 'aid of his honorable friend,' abandoning his clients and their property during a session of a principal court of Maryland, now filled, as I am told, with the clamors and ruin of his clients."

The Chief Justice's opinion was not less offensive to the

President than Martin's philippics. He descanted, at length, upon a passage which intimated that even the bodily presence of the President might be compelled by the court. He emphatically denied this. "The Constitution," wrote the President, "enjoins the President's constant agency in the concerns of six millions of people. Is the law paramount to this which calls on him on behalf of a single one? Let us apply the judge's own doctrine to the case of himself and his brethren. The sheriff of Henrico (Judge Marshall's residence) summons him from the bench to quell a riot somewhere in his county. The federal judge is, by the general law, a part of the *posse* of the State sheriff. Would the judge abandon major duties to perform lesser ones? * * * The leading principle of our Constitution is the independence of the legislature, executive, and judiciary of each other, and none are more jealous of this than the judiciary. But would the executive be independent of the judiciary, if he were subject to the *commands* of the latter, and to imprisonment for disobedience, if the several courts could bandy him from pillar to post, keep him constantly trudging from north to south, and east to west, and withdraw him entirely from his constitutional duties? * * * The judge says, '*it is apparent* that the President's duties as chief magistrate do not demand his whole time, and are not unremitting.' If he alludes to our annual retirement from the seat of goverment, during the sickly season, he should be told that such arrangements are made for carrying on the public business that it goes on as unremittingly there as if we were at the seat of government. I pass more hours in public business at Monticello than I do here every day and it is much more laborious, because all must be done in writing."

These passages show the more than official interest that Mr. Jefferson took in the events that were transpiring at Richmond. They show who was the real prosecutor of the prisoner, and who inspired the eloquence and zeal of those who were delegated to conduct the cause.

At length on the 15th of June, twenty-four days after the opening of the court, General Wilkinson, who had arrived on

the 13th, exhausted with the fatigue of his journey, appeared in court. His bearing, it was said at the time, was serene and commanding, while the countenance of the prisoner wore an expression of ineffable contempt. Business now proceeded with more celerity. Witnesses were sworn and sent to the grand jury in scores. Prodigious efforts were made by Colonel Burr and his counsel to exclude and vitiate the testimony of General Wilkinson. But, on the 24th of June, while Mr. Botts was in the very act of urging the attachment of Wilkinson for procuring evidence by means violent, unlawful, and corrupting, the coming of the grand jury was announced, bearing the result of their investigations. With their distinguished foreman at the head of the procession, they marched into the court-room and took their places, amid the hushed and intense expectation of a crowded auditory. The grand jury, Mr. Randolph said, had agreed upon several indictments, which he handed to the clerk of the court. The clerk took them, and read aloud the endorsements upon them, which were as follows:

"An indictment against Aaron Burr for treason;" "an indictment against Aaron Burr for a misdemeanor;" "an indictment against Herman Blennerhassett for treason;" "an indictment against Herman Blennerhassett for misdemeanor."

The eyes of the auditors sought involuntarily the countenance of the prisoner. It was utterly unmoved; his manner differed in no degree whatever from that which he had exhibited at every stage of the trial. A Richmond newspaper of the following day, however, announced to a country hungry for exciting intelligence, that when the clerk read the first endorsement, the prisoner was thrown into a state of indescribable consternation and dismay.

The grand jury retired. Mr. Botts concluded his speech. An attempt was made to show that the prisoner might still be held on bail; but after debate, the Chief Justice decided that he was "under the necessity of committing Colonel Burr." Late in the afternoon, through a concourse of hundreds of spectators who looked on in silence, Colonel Burr was conducted by the marshal of the district to the city jail of Richmond.

His first thought on being conducted to his apartment in the prison was to allay the apprehensions which, he well knew, the news of his imprisonment would excite in the mind of his daughter. He wrote her a letter, showing the absurdity and groundlessness of the indictments for treason. He said, they were founded on the allegations, that "Colonel Tyler, with twenty or thirty men, stopped at Blennerhassett's Island on their way down the Ohio; that though these men were not armed, and had no military array or organization, and though they did neither use force nor threaten it, yet having set out with a view of taking temporary possession of New Orleans on their way to Mexico, that such intent was treasonable, and therefore a war was levied on Blennerhassett's Island by *construction;* and that, though Colonel Burr was then at Frankfort on his way to Tennessee, yet, having advised the measure, he was, *by construction of law*, present at the island, and levied war there." He declared, that of the fifty witnesses who had been examined by the grand jury, thirty had perjured themselves. "I beg and expect it of you," he said in conclusion, "that you will conduct yourelf as becomes my daughter, and that you manifest no signs of weakness or alarm."

On the following day, the grand jury indicted ex-senators Dayton and Smith, Comfort Tyler, Israel Smith, and Davis Floyd for the same offenses. Hour after hour, the lawyers talked their best, and occasionally, their loudest, upon the motion to attach General Wilkinson for contempt. In vain.

The next day, on the opening of the court, the counsel of the prisoner presented a paper to the judges, stating that the city jail, where their client was confined, was unhealthy and inconvenient, and was so constructed that he could not have a room to himself, which rendered it almost impossible for his counsel to consult with him. They therefore prayed that better quarters might be provided. The Governor of the State, under the advice of his counsel, having offered apartments in the penitentiary near Richmond, the Chief Justice ordered the prisoner's removal thither. This proceeding seems to have filled up the measure of Jefferson's disgust. "Before an impartial jury," he wrote to Mr. Hay, "Burr's conduct would

convict himself, were not one word of testimony to be offered against him. But to what a state will our law be reduced by party feelings in those who administer it? Why do not Blennerhassett, Dayton, and the rest, demand private and comfortable lodgings? In a country where an equal application of law to every condition of man is fundamental, how could it be denied to them? How can it ever be denied to the most degraded malefactor?"

On the 13th of June, the court, having been occupied for nearly two months in getting the prisoners simply indicted, rested from its labors, and adjourned to meet again on the 3d of August. The proceedings thus far were immediately published in a thick, three-shilling pamphlet, which seems, if we may judge from the newspapers of that day, to have confirmed the country in its impressions of the prisoner's guilt.

For example — at a Fourth-of-July celebration in Cecil county, Maryland, the following were among the toasts:

"The grand jurors lately impaneled at Richmond to indict the traitors of their country. May their zeal and patriotism in the cause of liberty secure them a crown of immortal glory, and the fruits of their labor be a death-wound to all conspirators.

"Luther Martin, the ex-attorney-general of Maryland, the mutual and highly respected friend of a convicted traitor. May his exertions to preserve the Catiline of America procure him an honorable coat of tar, and a plumage of feathers that will rival in finery all the mummeries of Egypt.

"Aaron Burr, the man who once received the confidence of a free people. May his treachery to his country exalt him to the scaffold, and hemp be his escort to the republic of dust and ashes."

To these elegant effusions of patriotic hilarity, Luther Martin replied with a spirit and audacity never employed by public men of the present day in addressing the sovereign People. "Who is this gentleman," said he, "whose guilt you have pronounced, and for whose blood your parched throats so thirst? Was he not, a few years past, adored by you next to your God? I mean your earthly god; for whether you

believe in a deity who has any government over your 'republic of dust and ashes,' I know not. Were you not, then, his warmest admirers? Did he not then possess every virtue? Had he then one sin — even a single weakness of human nature? He was then in power. He had then influence. You would then have been proud of his notice. One smile from him would have brightened up all your faces. One frown from him would have lengthened all your visages!

"Go, ye holiday, ye sunshine friends — ye time-servers — ye criers of hosannah to-day and crucifiers to-morrow — go, hide your heads, if possible, from the contempt and detestation of every virtuous, every honorable inhabitant of every clime!"

In Richmond itself, however, Colonel Burr had found friends enough. From the day of his arrival, he had been growing in the esteem and good-will of those who attended the court and saw his uniform urbanity and good humor. His situation in the penitentiary was extremely agreeable. He had a suite of three rooms in the third story, extending one hundred feet, where he was allowed to see his friends without the presence of a witness. His rooms were so thronged with visitors, at times, as to present the appearance of a levee. Servants were continually arriving "with messages, notes, and inquiries, bringing oranges, lemons, pineapples, raspberries, apricots, cream, butter, ice," and other articles — presents from the ladies of the city. In expectation of his daughter's arrival, some of his friends in the town provided a house for her accommodation. The jailor, too, was all civility. Colonel Burr often laughed at the recollection of a conversation that took place between himself and the jailor on the evening of his arrival.

"I hope, sir," said the jailor, "that it would not be disagreeable to you if I should lock this door after dark?"

"By no means," replied the prisoner; "I should prefer it, to keep out intruders."

"It is our custom, sir," continued the jailor, "to extinguish all lights at nine o'clock. I hope, sir, you will have no objection to conform to that."

"That, sir," said Burr, "I am sorry to say, is impossible, for I never go to bed till twelve, and always burn two candles."

"Very well, sir, just as you please," replied the jailor. "I should have been glad if it had been otherwise; but, as you please, sir."

Toward the close of July, he received notice of Theodosia's approach. "Remember," he wrote to her, "no agitations, no complaints, no fears or anxieties on the road, or I renounce thee." And again: "I want an independent and discerning witness to my conduct and to that of the government. The scenes which have passed and those about to be transacted will exceed all reasonable credibility, and will hereafter be deemed fables, unless attested by very high authority. I repeat, what has heretofore been written, that I should never invite any one, much less those so dear to me, to witness my disgrace. I may be immured in dungeons, chained, murdered in legal form, but I can not be humiliated or disgraced. If absent, you will suffer great solicitude. In my presence you will feel none, whatever may be the *malice* or the *power* of my enemies, and in both they abound." And again: "I am informed that some good-natured people here have provided you a house, and furnished it, a few steps from my *town-house.* I had also made a temporary provision for you in my town-house (city jail), whither I shall remove on Sunday; but I will not, if I can possibly avoid it, move before your arrival, having a great desire to *receive you all in this mansion* (the penitentiary). Pray, therefore, drive directly out here. You may get admission at any time from four in the morning till ten at night. Write me by the mail from Petersburg, that I may know of your approach."

Upon the letter last quoted was written in Theodosia's own hand: "*Received on our approach to Richmond. How happy it made me!*" She arrived the same day, and was thenceforth, until the end of the trial for treason, his companion and housekeeper. Her husband, faithful always to her and to her father, was with her, and sat by the side of her father when he was arraigned for treason.

The recollections of the late John Barney, formerly member of Congress from Maryland, confirm the view here given of Colonel Burr's position at Richmond during his trial. Mr. Barney was employed by Colonel Burr as his amanuensis, and lived in habits of intimacy with him for several weeks. With an extract from Mr. Barney's narrative, I conclude the present chapter:

"In 1803, I witnessed the dignity, impartiality, and winning grace with which Aaron Burr presided in the Senate of the United States during the trial of Judge Chace, impeached for partiality and injustice toward John Fries, indicted under the alien and sedition law.

"I attended his trial at Richmond, when he himself was indicted for treason. His prominent counselor was Luther Martin, of Baltimore, my father's lawyer, neighbor, and friend.

"His daughter Maria, afterward celebrated as Mrs. Richard Raynal Keene, invited my sister and self to dine with Colonel Burr. He was then living in a house standing alone, around which was a patrol of guards.

"The dinner was superb, abounding in all the luxuries which Virginia's generous soil yields in lavish abundance. Twenty ladies and gentlemen of rank, fortune, and fashion, graced the festive board.

"He was esteemed a persecuted martyr. Distress, in every form and shape, makes an irresistible appeal to woman's sympathy; her tears often flow for the suffering of the criminal who expiates his crimes on the gibbet.

"On this occasion, Burr's fascinating flatteries were lavished indiscriminately on the sex in general. Man he had ever found treacherous — woman always true to sustain him in adversity, solacing in affliction, and giving a charm to life, without which life itself was not worth possessing.

"The grand jury finding a true bill, he was forthwith removed to the State prison. There we followed him; he received us in his usual bland, courteous manner; apologized for our being introduced into his bed-chamber — his drawing-room being then deranged by the fitting up of his ice-house,

which was in fact in his chimney-corner. Iron gratings prevented his egress, admitting free circulation of light and air, I felt pride and took pleasure in being permitted to become his amanuensis. Each day as I rode along the streets my curricle was freighted with cake, confectionery, flowers, redolent with perfume, wreathed into fancy bouquets of endless variety.

"The trial was tedious and prolonged. I traveled on to the borders of North Carolina, lingered for awhile at the noble mansion of Lady Shipwith. On my return, I found the persevering Attorney-General, George Hay, fatigued, worried.

"'Would that I could only hang upon a gate, and have a little negro to swing me to and fro all day. The law's delay — the special pleadings of the bar, its interminable controversies have worn out and exhausted me. I shan't be able to hang Burr, but will be content to hang myself on a gate.' Thus spoke George Hay, than whom never lived a purer patriot, or a more upright, conscientious man."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE TRIAL.

FOURTEEN DAYS SPENT IN GETTING A JURY—GENERAL EATON'S TESTIMONY—COMMODORE TRUXTON'S TESTIMONY—PETER TAYLOR'S TESTIMONY—JACOB ALLBRIGHT'S TESTIMONY—THE NINE DAYS' DEBATE ON THE ADMISSIBILITY OF INDIRECT EVIDENCE—WIRT'S CELEBRATED SPEECH—BLENNERHASSETT'S DIARY—DECISION OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE—THE VERDICT—LETTER OF THEODOSIA'S—THE TRIAL FOR MISDEMEANOR—BURR IN BALTIMORE.

THE court met on the 3d of August. Present, the same judges as before. Present, the same counsel. Present, an equal throng of auditors flushed with expectation. Present, more than one hundred and forty witnesses, and a panel of forty-eight jurors. Blennerhassett had arrived, and was in prison. Burr had been brought from his "country house" to a building in the city near the court-room, where he was guarded vigilantly, night and day. He entered the court-room accompanied by his son-in-law, Governor Alston, of South Carolina, and exhibited all his wonted serenity of manner.

Fourteen days elapsed before the jury were sworn. Some of these days were wasted in waiting for the arrival of witnesses, but most of them were consumed in attempting to find among the mass of jurors twelve who had not formed and *expressed* an opinion of the prisoner's guilt. One man confessed to having said that any one who did what Colonel Burr had done ought to be hung. Another had expressed the opinion that Colonel Burr had done *something* wrong, and seduced Blennerhassett into it; but that he (Burr) was so "sensible" a man, that if there was any hole left he would creep out of it. Another had long thought that the prisoner was a very bad man. Another believed him guilty of treasonable intention, but had doubts whether an overt act had been committed, because he

believed Colonel Burr to be a man of such "deep intrigue as never to jeopardize his own life until thousands fell before him." Another said that his bad opinion of Colonel Burr had been confirmed by what he had heard from his own lips in court. With one of the panel, the prisoner had the following conversation in open court:

"Have the rumors (mentioned by the juror) excited a prejudice in your mind against me?" asked Colonel Burr.

"I have no prejudice for or against you," was the reply.

Mr. Botts asked, "Are you a freeholder?"

"Yes," said the juror; "I have two patents for land."

"Are you worth three hundred dollars?" inquired one of the counsel.

"Yes; I have a house here worth the half of it."

"Have you another at home," inquired one of the counsel, jocosely, "to make up the other half?"

A general titter followed this question, which nettled the gentleman. "Yes," said he, "four of them." Then, turning to the spectators, he continued, "I am surprised that they should be in so much terror of me. Perhaps my *name* may be a terror, for my first name is HAMILTON!"

"*That* remark," said Colonel Burr, with memorable dignity, "is a sufficient cause for objecting to him. I challenge him peremptorily." And this was his only peremptory challenge.

In short, out of the whole *venire* of forty-eight, but four men were found whose opinions were sufficiently undecided to admit of their acceptance as jurors; and of those four, all but one admitted that they had been prejudiced against the prisoner. A second *venire* of forty-eight were summoned; all of whom, it was soon discovered, had formed unfavorable opinions. An attempt was made by the counsel for the defense to quash the trial, for the simple reason that an impartial jury could not be obtained, and the law requires that every prisoner shall be tried by an impartial jury. At length, the prisoner was allowed to select eight jurors from the last *venire* to add to the four obtained from the first. Some even of these confessed to being decidedly prejudiced, confessed to having

warmly denounced the prisoner on many occasions. They were accepted, however, and sworn, on the 17th of the month.

Proclamation was then made in the usual form. The prisoner stood up, while the indictment was read. Mr. Hay then rose and opened the case with a speech of great length, in which he discoursed upon the nature of treason; and, briefly, upon the treason committed by the prisoner at the bar. It would be proved, he said, that the prisoner *meant to take New Orleans*, and that the proceedings at Blennerhassett Island were the beginning of the execution of that scheme. Much more would be proved, but that alone was enough to convict the prisoner of treason. He concluded by bestowing a swelling panegyric upon General Wilkinson, as the saviour of the American people from the horrors of civil war.

General Eaton was the first witness called. He appeared and was sworn, when Colonel Burr objected to that order of examining witnesses. General Eaton was called, he said, to prove treasonable intentions, *before* it had been proved that any overt act of treason had been committed. No testimony of that kind, he contended, was admissible until the overt act had been established. This question was argued in an earnest and able manner by the counsel on both sides, for several hours, Luther Martin distinguishing himself by his familiarity with precedents and authorities. The day was consumed in this critical debate. On the following morning, the court gave its decision, as follows: "So far as General Eaton's testimony relates to the fact charged in the indictment, so far as it relates to levying war on Blennerhassett's Island, so far as it relates to a design to seize on New Orleans, or to separate by force the western from the Atlantic States, it is deemed relevant and is now admissible; so far as it respects other plans to be executed in the city of Washington, or elsewhere, if it indicate a treasonable design, it is a design to commit a distinct act of treason, and is therefore not relevant to the present indictment."

Eaton was then placed upon the stand, and examined at length. He was permitted to tell his story in his own way

with little interruption. As it was Eaton's evidence which had most to do with convincing the public of Burr's own day that he was a traitor of the deepest dye, it is thought due to truth and to Aaron Burr, that the whole of that evidence should here be given. I omit only a passage in which the witness wandered from Burr to Barbary, and descanted upon the disappointments and wrongs he had endured in that part of the world.

"During the winter of 1805–6," he began, "Aaron Burr signified to me that he was organizing a military expedition to be moved against the Spanish provinces, on the south-western frontiers of the United States: I understood under the authority of the general government. From our existing controversies with Spain, and from the tenor of the President's communications to both Houses of Congress, a conclusion was naturally drawn, that war with that power was inevitable. I had just then returned from the coast of Africa, and having been for many years employed on our frontier, or a coast more barbarous and obscure, I was ignorant of the estimation in which Colonel Burr was held by his country. The distinguished rank he held in society, and the strong marks of confidence which he had received from his fellow citizens, did not permit me to doubt his patriotism. As a military character, I had been made acquainted with none within the United States, under whose direction a soldier might with greater security confide his honor than Colonel Burr. In case of my country's being involved in a war, I should have thought it my duty to obey so honorable a call, as was proposed to me. Under impressions like these, I did engage to embark myself in the enterprise, and pledged myself to Colonel Burr's confi dence. At several interviews, it appeared to be his intention to convince me by maps and other documents, of the feasi bility of penetrating to Mexico. At length, from certain indistinct expressions and innuendoes, I admitted a suspicion that Colonel Burr had other projects. He used strong expressions of reproach against the administration of the government: accused them of want of character, want of energy, and want of gratitude. He seemed desirous of irritating my resent-

ment by dilating on certain injurious strictures I had received on the floor of Congress, on account of certain transactions on the coast of Tripoli; and also on the delays in adjusting my accounts for advances of money on account of the United States; and talked of pointing out to me modes of honorable indemnity.

"I listened to Colonel Burr's mode of indemnity; and as I had by this time began to suspect that the military expedition he had on foot was unlawful, I permitted him to believe myself resigned to his influence, that I might understand the extent and motive of his arrangements. Colonel Burr now laid open his project of revolutionizing the territory west of the Alleghany; establishing an independent empire there; New Orleans to be the capital, and he himself to be the chief; organizing a military force on the waters of the Mississippi, and carrying conquest to Mexico. After much conversation, which I do not particularly recollect, respecting the feasibility of the project, as was natural, I stated impediments to his operations; such as the republican habits of the citizens of that country, their attachment to the present administration of the government, the want of funds, the opposition he would experience from the regular army of the United States stationed on that frontier, and the resistance to be expected from Miranda, in case he should succeed in republicanizing the Mexicans. Colonel Burr appeared to have no difficulty in removing these obstacles. He stated to me, that he had in person (I think the preceding season), made a tour through that country; that he had secured to his interests, and attached to his person (I do not recollect the exact expression, but the meaning, and, I believe, the words were), the most distinguished citizens of Tennessee, Kentucky, and the Territory of Orleans; that he had inexhaustible resources and funds; that the army of the United States would act with him; that it would be reinforced by ten or twelve thousand men from the above-mentioned States and Territory; that he had powerful agents in the Spanish territory, and 'as for Miranda,' said Mr. Burr, facetiously, 'we must hang Miranda.' In the course of several conversations on this subject, he proposed to give me a

distinguished command in his army; I understood him to say, the second command. I asked him who would command in chief. He said, General Wilkinson. I observed, that it was singular he should count upon General Wilkinson; the distinguished command and high trust he held under government, as the commander-in-chief of our army, and as governor of a province, he would not be apt to put at hazard for any prospect of precarious aggrandizement. Colonel Burr stated that General Wilkinson balanced in the confidence of his country; that it was doubtful whether he would much longer retain the distinction and confidence he now enjoyed; and that he was prepared to secure to himself a permanency. I asked Colonel Burr if he knew General Wilkinson. He said, yes; and echoed the question. I told him that twelve years ago I was at the same time a captain in the wing of the legion of the United States, which General Wilkinson commanded, his acting brigade-major, and aid-de-camp, and that I thought I knew him well. He asked me, what I knew of General Wilkinson. I said, I knew General Wilkinson would act as lieutenant to no man in existence. 'You are in an error,' said Mr. Burr, 'Wilkinson will act as lieutenant to me.' From the tenor of much conversation on this subject, I was prevailed on to believe that the plan of revolution meditated by Colonel Burr, and communicated to me, had been concerted with General Wilkinson, and would have his coöperation; for Colonel Burr repeatedly, and very confidently expressed his belief, that the influence of General Wilkinson with his army, the promise of double pay and rations, the ambition of his officers, and the prospect of plunder and military achievements, would bring the army generally into the measure. I pass over here a conversation which took place between Colonel Burr and myself respecting a central revolution, as it is decided to be irrelevant by the opinion of the bench."

"Mr. Hay. — You allude to a revolution for overthrowing the government at Washington, and of revolutionizing the eastern States."

"I was passing over that to come down to the period when

I supposed he had relinquished that design, and adhered to the project of revolutionizing the West."

"Mr. WICKHAM. — What project do you mean?"

"A central general revolution. I was thoroughly convinced myself that such a project was already so far organ ized as to be dangerous, and that it would require an effort to suppress it. For in addition to positive assurances that Colonel Burr had of assistance and coöperation, he said that the vast extent of territory of the United States, west of the Al leghany mountains, which offered to adventurers, with a view on the mines of Mexico, would bring volunteers to his standard from all quarters of the Union. The situation which these communications, and the impressions they made upon me, placed me in, was peculiarly delicate. I had no overt act to produce against Colonel Burr. He had given me nothing upon paper; nor did I know of any person in the vicinity who had received similar communications, and whose testimony might support mine. He had mentioned to me no person as principally and decidedly engaged with him but General Wilkinson; a Mr. Alston, who, I afterward learned, was his son-in-law; and a Mr. Ephraim Kibby, who, I learned, was late a captain of rangers in Wayne's army. Of General Wilkinson, Burr said much, as I have stated; of Mr. Alston, very little, but enough to satisfy me that he was engaged in the project; and of Kibby, he said that he was brigade-major in the vicinity of Cincinnati (whether Cincinnati in Ohio or in Kentucky, I know not), who had much influence with the militia, and had already engaged the majority of the brigade to which he belonged, who were ready to march at Mr. Burr's signal. Mr. Burr talked of this revolution as a matter of right, inherent in the people, and constitutional; a revolution which would rather be advantageous than detrimental to the Atlantic States; a revolution which must eventually take place; and for the operation of which the present crisis was peculiarly favorable. He said there was no energy to be dreaded in the general government, and his conversations denoted a confidence that his arrangements were so well made that he should meet with no opposition at New Orleans, for the army and

chief citizens of that place were now ready to receive him On the solitary ground upon which I stood, I was at a loss how to conduct myself, though at no loss as respected my duty. I durst not place my lonely testimony in the balance against the weight of Colonel Burr's character; for by turning the tables upon me, which I thought any man, capable of such a project, was very capable of doing, I should sink under the weight. I resolved therefore with myself to obtain the removal of Mr. Burr from this country in a way honorable to him; and on this I did consult him, without his knowing my motive. Accordingly, I waited on the President of the United States, and after a desultory conversation, in which I aimed to draw his view to the westward, I took the liberty of suggesting to the President that I thought Colonel Burr ought to be removed from the country, because I considered him dangerous in it. The President asked where we should send him? Other places might have been mentioned, but I believe that Paris, London, and Madrid, were the places which were particularly named. The President, without positive expression (in such a matter of delicacy), signified that the trust was too important, and expressed something like a doubt about the integrity of Mr. Burr. I frankly told the President that perhaps no person had stronger grounds to suspect that integrity than I had; but that I believed his pride of ambition had so predominated over his other passions, that when placed on an eminence, and put on his honor, a respect to himself would secure his fidelity. I perceived that the subject was disagreeable to the President, and to bring him to my point in the shortest mode, and at the same time point to the danger, I said to him that I expected that we should in eighteen months have an insurrection, if not a revolution, on the waters of the Mississippi. The President said he had too much confidence in the information, the integrity, and attachment to the Union of the citizens of that country, to admit any apprehensions of that kind. The circumstance of no interrogatories being made to me, I thought imposed silence upon me at that time and place. Here, sir, I beg indulgence to declare my motives for recommending that gentleman to a foreign mission

at that time; and in the solemnity with which I stand here, I declare that Colonel Burr was neutral in my feelings; that it was through no attachment to him that I made that suggestion, but to avert a great national calamity which I saw approaching; to arrest a tempest which seemed lowering in the West; and to divert into a channel of usefulness those consummate talents, which were to mount 'the whirlwind and direct the storm.' These, and these only, were my reasons for making that recommendation.

"About the time of my having waited on the President, or a little before (I can not however be positive whether before or after), I determined at all events to have some evidence of the integrity of my intentions, and to fortify myself by the advice of two gentlemen, members of the House of Representatives, whose friendship and confidence I had the honor long to retain, and in whose wisdom and integrity I had the utmost faith and reliance. I am at liberty to give their names if required. I do not distinctly recollect, but I believe, that I had a conversation with a Senator on the subject. I developed to them all Mr. Burr's plans. They did not seem much alarmed.

"Little more passed between Colonel Burr and myself, relevant to this inquiry, while I remained at Washington; yet, though I could perceive symptoms of distrust in him toward me he was solicitous to engage me in his western plans.

"I returned to Massachusetts, to my own concerns, and thought no more of Colonel Burr, or his projects, or revolutions, until, in October last, a letter was put into my hands at Brumfield, from Mr. Belknap, of Marietta, to T. E. Danielson, of Brumfield, stating that Mr. Burr had contracted for boats which were building on the Ohio."

The cross-examination of this witness elicited nothing of importance. Colonel Burr took care to bring out the fact that General Eaton, who had been clamoring in vain for a settlement of his accounts for many months, was paid the sum of ten thousand dollars a few weeks after making the deposition respecting his conversation with Burr. That deposition appeared during the delirium of the public mind in January,

while Congress was debating the suspension of the Habeas Corpus, and while the military companies of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Boston were offering their services to the President in defense of a country supposed to be threatened, at once by foreign and domestic foes. Colonel Burr, by a quiet question or two, also called attention to the absurdity of a man's setting up for a patriot who tried to induce the President to promote a traitor to high and responsible office, and who, cognizant of that traitor's fell designs, could go home and think no more about them! Nothing but the excitement which prevailed in the spring of 1807 could have blinded people to the palpable and gross irreconcilabilities of Eaton's testimony.

Commodore Truxton was the next witness. He testified that Colonel Burr had explained to him his designs upon Mexico, and his intention to settle the lands on the Washita, and had invited him to join; but he had declined. "I asked him," said the commodore, "if the executive were privy to or concerned in the project. He answered, *emphatically*, that he was NOT." The following is part of Commodore Truxton's testimony:

Truxton. — Colonel Burr said, that after the Mexican expedition, he intended to provide a formidable navy, at the head of which he intended to place me: that he intended to establish an independent government, and give liberty to an enslaved world. I declined his propositions to me at first, because the President was not privy to the project. He asked me the best mode of attacking the Havana, Carthagena, and La Vera Cruz; but spoke of no particular force.

Question by Colonel Burr. — Do you not recollect my telling you of the propriety of private expeditions, undertaken by individuals in case of war; and that there had been such in the late war, and that there is no legal restraint on such expeditions?

Mr. Hay objected to this question as improper.

Colonel Burr insisted on its propriety, and that the gentlemen for the prosecution had set an example far beyond it.

Commodore Truxton answered — You said that Wilkinson,

the army, and many of the officers of the navy would join, and you spoke highly of Lieutenant Jones.

Colonel Burr. — Were we not on terms of intimacy? Was there any reserve on my part, in our frequent conversations? and did you ever hear me express any intention or sentiment respecting a division of the Union?

Answer. — We were very intimate. There seemed to be no reserve on your part. I never heard you speak of a division of the Union.

Colonel Burr. — Did I not state to you that the Mexican expedition would be very beneficial to this country?

Answer. — You did.

Colonel Burr. — Had you any serious doubt as to my intention to settle those lands?

Answer. — So far from that, I was astonished at the intelligence of your having different views, contained in newspapers received from the western country, after you went thither.*

Peter Taylor, formerly a gardener on Blennerhassett Island, was next examined. The only part of his evidence which threw light on the case, was a conversation which had taken place between himself and Blennerhassett in October, 1806. About that time, said Taylor, Blennerhassett "began to inquire for young men that had rifles; good, orderly men, that

* It is right to add that Commodore Truxton's evidence is confirmed by General Adair, who was thoroughly possessed of Burr's real designs. Adair was not examined on the trial, but he wrote, in March, 1807, the following statement: "So far as I know or believe of the intentions of Colonel Burr (and my enemies will agree I am not ignorant on this subject), they were to prepare and lead an expedition into Mexico, predicated on a war between the two governments; without a war he knew he could do nothing. On this war taking place he calculated with certainty, as well from the policy of the measure at this time as from the positive assurances of Wilkinson, who seemed to have the power to force it in his own hands. This continued to be the object of Colonel Burr until he heard of the venal and shameful bargain made by Wilkinson at the Sabine river; this information he received soon after the attempt to arrest him in Frankfort. He then turned his attention altogether toward strengthening himself on the Washita, and waiting a more favorable crisis."

would be conformable to order and discipline. He allowed that Colonel Burr and he and a few of his friends, had bought eight hundred thousand acres of land, and they wanted young men to settle it. He said he would give any young man who would go down the river one hundred acres of land, plenty of grog and victuals while going down the river, and three months' provisions after they had got to the end; every young man must have his rifle and blanket. I agreed to go myself, if I could carry my wife and family, but he said he must have further consultation upon that. When I got home I began to think, and asked him, what kind of seed we should carry with us? He said we did not want any, the people had seeds where we were going. I urged that subject to him several times; at last he made a sudden pause, and said, 'I will tell you what, Peter, we are going to take Mexico; one of the finest and richest places in the whole world.' He said that Colonel Burr would be the king of Mexico, and Mrs. Alston, daughter of Colonel Burr, was to be the queen of Mexico, whenever Colonel Burr died. He said that Colonel Burr had made fortunes for many in his time, but none for himself; but now he was going to make something for himself. He said that he had a great many friends in the Spanish territory; no less than two thousand Roman Catholic priests were engaged, and that all their friends too would join, if once he could get to them; that the Spaniards, like the French, had got dissatisfied with their government, and wanted to *swap* it. He told me that the British also were friends in this piece of business, and that he should go to England, on this piece of business, for Colonel Burr. He asked me if I would not like to go to England. I said I should certainly like to see my friends there, but would wish to go for nothing else. I then asked him what was to become of the men who were going to settle the lands he talked about? Were they to stop at the Red River, or to go on? He said, 'O, by God, I tell you, Peter, every man that will not conform to order and discipline, I will stab; you'll see how I'll fix them;' that when he got them far enough down the river, if they did not conform to order and discipline, he swore by God he'd stab them. I was aston-

ished: I told him I was no soldier, and could not fight. He said it made no odds; he did not want *me* to fight; he wanted me to go and live with Mrs Blennerhassett and the children, either at Natchez, or some other place, while he went on the expedition. I talked to him again, and told him the people had got it into their heads that he wanted to divide the Union. He said Colonel Burr and he could not do it themselves. All they could do was to tell the people the consequence of it. He said the people there paid the government upward of four hundred thousand dollars a year, and never received any benefit from it. He allowed it would be a very fine thing if they could keep that money among themselves on this side the mountains, and make locks, and build bridges, and cut roads."

The witness further testified that he had never chanced to see Colonel Burr on the island, and that the preparations made there for the expedition were merely the drying of corn and the packing of provisions. There was no "warlike array."

The Morgans, father and two sons, were then examined. They testified as stated in the former chapter.

Jacob Allbright was next called, and led off thus: "The first I knew of this business was, I was hired on the island to help to build a kiln for drying corn; and after working some time, Mrs. Blennerhassett told me that Mr. Blennerhassett and Colonel Burr were going to lay in provisions for an army for a year. I went to the mill, where I carried the corn to be ground after it had been dried. I worked four weeks in that business on the island. Last fall (or in September), after Blennerhassett had come home (he had been promising me cash for some time), I stept up to him. He had no money at the time; but would pay me next day, or soon. Says he, 'Mr. Allbright, you are a Dutchman.' But he asked me first and foremost, whether I would not join with him and go down the river? I told him I did not know what they were upon; and he said, 'Mr. Allbright, we are going to settle a new country.' And I gave him an answer that I would not like to leave my family. He said he did not want any families to go along with him. Then he said to me, 'You are a

Dutchman, and a common man; and as the Dutch are apt to be scared by high men, if you'll go to New Lancaster, where the Dutch live, and get me twenty or thirty to go with us, I will give you as many dollars.' New Lancaster was some distance off. I went home then, and gave him no answer upon that. In a few days after the boats came and landed at the island. The snow was about two or three inches deep, and I went out a hunting. I was on the Ohio side; I met two men; I knew they belonged to the boats, but I wanted to find out; and they asked me whether I had not given my consent to go along with Blennerhassett down the river? As we got into a conversation together, they named themselves Colonel Burr's men, belonging to the boats, landed at the island. When they asked me whether I had not consented to go down with Blennerhassett, I put a question to them. I told them I did not know what they were about; and one of the gentlemen told me they were going to take a silver mine from the *Spanish*. I asked the gentlemen whether they would not allow that this would raise war with America? They replied, no. They were only a few men; and if they went with a good army, they would give up the country, and nothing more said about it. These men showed me what fine rifles they had going down the river with them."

The witness testified further that the men assembled on the island were armed with rifles and pistols, according to the custom of the country. There were no bayonets; no unusual store of powder or bullets; no military drill or organization.

Blennerhassett's groom gave similar testimony. The building of the boats and the purchase of provisions were proved by the persons concerned in those transactions. Dudley Woodbridge, partner and agent of Blennerhassett, testified, that that gentleman was worth, exclusive of his island and his five negroes, not more than seventeen thousand dollars; that he was totally unacquainted with military affairs; that he was so short-sighted as not to be able to distinguish a man from a horse at the distance of ten paces; and that the greater part of the expense incurred in buying the provisions and

building the boats, was paid, not by Blennerhasset, but by Burr.

The evidence of the alleged overt act here rested. It is not necessary to say that no overt act had been proved; nothing like an act of treason had been proved. The prosecution being now about to introduce evidence collateral and indirect, the counsel for the defense objected. Here they had resolved to take a position, and try all the resources of their talents, their learning, and their powers of endurance, in resisting the introduction of one word more of testimony, unless to prove the overt act. It was the 20th of August (and the seventeenth day of the trial) when the debate on this question began, and it lasted nine days. It was, doubtless, the finest display of legal knowledge and ability of which the history of the American bar can boast. The report of it fills a large volume. It all turns upon the simple question so often stated, whether, until the *fact* of a crime is proved, any thing may be heard respecting the guilty *intention* of the person accused. The counsel for the defense contended, first, that no overt act had been committed; and, secondly, that if an overt act had been committed, the evidence pointed to Blennerhassett as the principal, and to Burr only as a possible accessory.

Wickham, Martin, Hay, Randolph, Botts, MacRae, all won honor in this keen encounter; but as they confined themselves chiefly to the law of the question, and aimed solely to convince the clear-headed judge who was to decide it, their speeches are not interesting, nor always intelligible to the unprofessional reader. In the popular view, William Wirt was the hero of the occasion. One famous passage in one of his speeches in this debate, has obtained the last honors of American literature — it has got into the school-books, and is declaimed on exhibition days. Perhaps nothing ever written about Aaron Burr has done more to make and keep him odious than this piece of fluent, sounding rhetoric. Familiar as it is to many readers, whom it has aided to carry off the honors of the platform, it must be printed here once more; and printed entire.

"Having shown, I think," said Mr. Wirt, "on the ground of *law*, that the prisoner can not be considered as an accessory, let me press the inquiry, whether on the ground of *reason* he be a principal or an accessory; and remember that his project was to seize New Orleans, separate the Union, and erect an independent empire in the West, of which he was to be the chief. This was the destination of the plot, and the conclusion of the drama. Will any man say that Blennerhassett was the principal, and Burr but an accessory? Who will believe that Burr, the author and projector of the plot, who raised the forces, who enlisted the men, and who procured the funds for carrying it into execution, was made a cat's paw of? Will any man believe that Burr, who is a soldier, bold, ardent, restless, and aspiring, the great actor, whose brain conceived, and whose hand brought the plot into operation, that he should sink down into an accessory, and that Blennerhassett should be elevated into a principal? He would startle at once at the thought. Aaron Burr, the contriver of the whole conspiracy, to everybody concerned in it was as the sun to the planets which surround him. Did he not bind them in their respective orbits and give them their light, their heat, and their motion? Yet he is to be considered an accessory, and Blennerhassett is to be the principal!

"Let us put the case between Burr and Blennerhassett. Let us compare the two men and settle this question of precedence between them. It may save a good deal of troublesome ceremony hereafter.

"Who Aaron Burr is, we have seen in part already. I will add, that beginning his operations in New York, he associates with him men whose wealth is to supply the necessary funds. Possessed of the main spring, his personal labor contrives all the machinery. Pervading the continent from New York to New Orleans, he draws into his plan, by every allurement which he can contrive, men of all ranks and descriptions. To youthful ardor he presents danger and glory; to ambition, rank, and titles, and honors; to avarice, the mines of Mexico. To each person whom he addresses he presents the object adapted to his taste. His recruiting officers are appointed

Men are engaged throughout the continent. Civil life is indeed quiet upon its surface, but in its bosom this man has contrived to deposit the materials which, with the slightest touch of his match, produce an explosion to shake the continent. All this his restless ambition has contrived; and in the autumn of 1806 he goes forth for the last time to apply this match. On his occasion he meets with Blennerhassett.

"Who is Blennerhassett? A native of Ireland, a man of letters, who fled from the storms of his own country to find quiet in ours. His history shows that war is not the natural element of his mind. If it had been, he never would have exchanged Ireland for America. So far is an army from furnishing the society natural and proper to Mr. Blennerhassett's character, that on his arrival in America, he retired even from the population of the Atlantic States, and sought quiet and solitude in the bosom of our western forests. But he carried with him taste, and science, and wealth; and lo, the desert smiled! Possessing himself of a beautiful island in the Ohio, he rears upon it a palace and decorates it with every romantic embellishment of fancy. A shrubbery, that Shenstone might have envied, blooms around him. Music, that might have charmed Calypso and her nymphs, is his. An extensive library spreads its treasures before him. A philosophical apparatus offers to him all the secrets and mysteries of nature. Peace, tranquillity, and innocence shed their mingled delights around him. And to crown the enchantment of the scene, a wife, who is said to be lovely even beyond her sex, and graced with every accomplishment that can render it irresistible, had blessed him with her love and made him the father of several children. The evidence would convince you that this is but a faint picture of the real life. In the midst of all this peace, this innocent simplicity and this tranquillity, this feast of the mind, this pure banquet of the heart, the destroyer comes; he comes to change this paradise into a hell. Yet the flowers do not wither at his approach. No monitory shuddering through the bosom of their unfortunate possessor warns him of the ruin that is coming upon him. A stranger presents himself. Introduced to their civilities by the high rank which he had lately held in his

country, he soon finds his way to their hearts, by the dignity and elegance of his demeanor, the light and beauty of his conversation, and the seductive and fascinating power of his address. The conquest was not difficult. Innocence is ever simple and credulous. Conscious of no design itself, it suspects none in others. It wears no guard before its breast. Every door and portal and avenue of the heart is thrown open, and all who choose it enter. Such was the state of Eden when the serpent entered its bowers. The prisoner, in a more engaging form, winding himself into the open and unpracticed heart of the unfortunate Blennerhassett, found but little difficulty in changing the native character of that heart and the objects of its affection. By degrees he infuses into it the poison of his own ambition. He breathes into it the fire of his own courage; a daring and desperate thirst for glory; an ardor panting for great enterprises, for all the storm, and bustle, and hurricane of life. In a short time the whole man is changed, and every object of his former delight is relinquished. No more he enjoys the tranquil scene: it has become flat and insipid to his taste. His books are abandoned. His retort and crucible are thrown aside. His shrubbery blooms and breathes its fragrance upon the air in vain: he likes it not. His ear no longer drinks the rich melody of music; it longs for the trumpet's clangor and the cannon's roar. Even the prattle of his babes, once so sweet, no longer affects him; and the angel smile of his wife, which hitherto touched his bosom with ecstacy so unspeakable, is now unseen and unfelt. Greater objects have taken possession of his soul. His imagination has been dazzled by visions of diadems, of stars and garters, and titles of nobility. He has been taught to burn with restless emulation at the names of great heroes and conquerors. His enchanted island is destined soon to relapse into a wilderness; and in a few months we find the beautiful and tender partner of his bosom whom he lately 'permitted not the winds of' summer 'to visit too roughly,' we find her shivering at midnight, on the winter banks of the Ohio, and mingling her tears with the torrents, that froze as they fell. Yet this unfortunate man, thus deluded from his interest and his happiness, thus seduced

from the paths of innocence and peace, thus confounded in the toils that were deliberately spread for him and overwhelmed by the mastering spirit and genius of another — this man, thus ruined and undone, and made to play a subordinate part in this grand drama of guilt and treason — this man is to be called the principal offender, while *he*, by whom he was thus plunged in misery, is comparatively innocent, a mere accessory! Is this reason? Is it law? Is it humanity? Sir, neither the human heart nor the human understanding will bear a perversion so monstrous and absurd! so shocking to the soul! so revolting to reason! Let Aaron Burr then not shrink from the high destination which he has courted, and having already ruined Blennerhassett in fortune, character, and happiness for ever, let him not attempt to finish the tragedy by thrusting that ill-fated man between himself and punishment.

"Upon the whole, sir, reason declares Aaron Burr the principal in this crime, and confirms herein the sentence of the law; and the gentleman, in saying that his offense is of a derivative and accessorial nature, begs the question and draws his conclusions from what, instead of being conceded, is denied. It is clear from what has been said, that Burr did not derive his guilt from the men on the island, but imparted his own guilt to them; that he is not an accessory, but a principal; and therefore, that there is nothing in the objection which demands a record of their conviction before we shall go on with our proof against him."

In curious contrast with this oration is a passage in a letter from Mrs. Blennerhassett to her husband, written on the 3d of August, which he received during the debate of which Mr. Wirt's brilliant fiction was a part. He might, indeed, have been reading it at the very moment that Wirt was in the full flow of his oratorical romance. "Apprise Colonel Burr," she wrote, "of my warmest acknowledgments, for his own and Mrs. Alston's kind remembrance; and tell him to assure her she has inspired me with a warmth of attachment which never can diminish. I wish him to urge her to write to me."

In contrast only less striking is the diary of Mr. Blennerhassett, which he kept during the trial, while he was in con-

finement. When Blennerhassett wrote the passages about to be quoted, he was already in dispute with Burr and with Alston respecting the proper apportionment of their common pecuniary loss. Yet he could write of him in terms like these:

"The vivacity of Burr's wit, and the exercise of his proper talents, now constantly solicited here, (at Richmond) in private and public exhibition, while they display his powers and address at the levee and the bar, must engross more of his time than he can spare from the demands of other gratifications; while they display him to the eager eyes of the multitude, like a favorite gladiator, measuring over the arena of his fame with firm step and manly grace, the pledges of easy victory."

* * * * * * * *

"I visited Burr this morning. He is as gay as usual, and as busy in speculations on reorganizing his projects for action as if he had never suffered the least interruption. He observed to Major Smith and me, that in six months our schemes would be all remounted; that we could now new model them in a better mold than formerly, having a better view of the ground, and a more perfect knowledge of our men. We were silent. It should yet be granted, that if Burr possessed sensibility of the right sort, with one hundredth part of the energies for which, with many, he has obtained such ill-grounded credit, his first and last determination, with the morning and the night, should be the destruction of those enemies who have so long and cruelly wreaked their malicious vengeance on him."

* * * * * *

"I was glad to find Burr had at last thought of asking us to dine with him, as I was rather curious again to see him shine in a *partie quarrie*, consisting of new characters. We therefore walked with him from court; Luther Martin, who lives with him, accompanying us. The dinner was neat, and followed by three or four sorts of wine. Splendid poverty! During the chit-chat, after the cloth was removed, a letter was handed to Burr, next to whom I sat. I immediately smelt musk. Burr broke the seal, put the cover to his nose,

and then handed it to me, saying — 'This amounts to a disclosure.' I smelled the paper, and said, 'I think so.' The whole physiognomy of the man now assumed an alteration and vivacity that, to a stranger who had never seen him before, would have sunk full fifteen years of his age. 'This,' said he, 'reminds me of a detection very neatly practiced upon me in New York.' (He then related the story of the musk-scented note, given in a former chapter.)

* * * * * *

"After some time Martin and Prevost withdrew, and we passed to the topics of our late adventures on the Mississippi, in which Burr said little, but declared he did not know of any reason to blame General Jackson, of Tennessee, for any thing he had done or omitted. But he declares he will not lose a day after the favorable issue at the capitol (his acquittal), of which he has no doubt, to direct his entire attention to setting up his projects (which have only been suspended) on a better model, 'in which work,' he says, 'he has even here made some progress.'"

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"I have seen a complete file of all the depositions, made before the grand jury, in Burr's possession. It must be confessed that few other men, in his circumstances, could have procured these documents out of the custody of offices filled by his inveterate enemies. Burr asserted, to-day, in court, that he expected documents that would disqualify Eaton as a witness."

* * * * * *

"As we were chatting, after dinner, in staggered the whole rear-guard of Burr's forensic army — I mean, the celebrated Luther Martin, who yesterday concluded his fourteen hours' speech. His visit was to Major Smith, but he took me by the hand, saying there was no need of an introduction. I was too much interested by the little I had seen, and the great things I had heard, of this man's powers and passions, not to improve the present opportunity to survey him in every light the length of his visit would permit. I accordingly recommended our brandy as superior, placing a pint-tumbler before

him. No ceremonies retarded the libation; no inquiries solicited him upon any subject, till apprehensions of his withdrawing suggested some topic to quiet him on his seat. Were I now to mention only the subjects of law, politics, news, et cetera, on which he descanted, I should not be believed, when I said his visit did not exceed thirty-five minutes. Imagine a man capable, in that space of time, to deliver some account of an entire week's proceedings in the trial, with extracts from memory of several speeches on both sides, including long ones from his own; to recite half columns *verbatim* of a series of papers, of which he said he is the author; to caricature Jefferson; to give a history of his acquaintance with Burr; expatiate on his *virtues* and sufferings, maintain his credit, embellish his fame, and intersperse the whole with sententious reprobations and praises of several other characters; some estimate, with these preparations, may be formed of this man's powers, which are yet shackled by a preternatural secretion or excretion of saliva which embarrasses his delivery. In this, his manner is rude, and his language ungrammatical; which is cruelly aggravated upon his hearers, by the verbosity and repetition of his style. With the warmest passions, that hurry him, like a torrent, over those characters or topics that lie most in the way of their course, he has, by practice, acquired the faculty of curbing his feelings, which he never suffers to charge the enemy till broken by the superior numbers of his arguments and authorities, by which he always out-flanks him, when he lets loose the reserve upon the center, with redoubled impetuosity. Yet fancy has been denied to his mind, or grace to his person or habits. These are gross, and incapable of restraint, even upon the most solemn public occasions. This is, at all times, awkward and disgusting. Hence, his invectives are rather coarse than pointed; his eulogiums more fulsome than pathetic. In short, every trait of his portrait may be given in one word — he is '*the Thersites of the law.*'"

* * * * * *

"Wirt spoke very much to engage the fancy of his hearers, to-day, without affecting their understanding. For he can

not reason upon the facts before him, and can no more conduct a law argument than I could raise a temple; as Junius says of the king: 'The feather that adorns him supports his flight; strip him of his plumage, and you fix him to earth!'"

* * * * *

"I called on Burr this morning, when he at last mentioned to me, during a short tête-à-tête, that he was preparing to go to England; that the time was now auspicious for him, and he wished to know whether I could give him letters. I answered that I supposed, when he mentioned England, he meant London, as his business would probably be with people in office; that I knew none of the present ministry, nor did I believe I had a single acquaintance in London. He replied that he meant to visit every part of the country, and would be glad to get letters to any one. I said I would think of it, that I might discover whether I had any friends there whom it would be an object worth his attention to know, and took leave. We can only conjecture his designs. For my part, I am disposed to suspect that he has no serious intent of reviving any of his speculations in America, or even of returning from Europe if he can get there."

Thus Blennerhassett.

It may as well be further stated, that Blennerhassett was *not* ruined through his connection with Burr, but by his own indolence and folly, aided by Jefferson's embargo, and the war of 1812. After the trial was over he went home to find his shrubbery that Shenstone might have envied, etc., laid waste by the Vandals of the Ohio river, who had taken advantage of the master's absence to gratify their abhorrence of elegance and taste. He removed afterward to Mississippi, where he bought a cotton plantation of a thousand acres, which his wife managed, and for a while made profitable. But the continuance of the embargo, and the war which followed it, depressed the cotton interest, and completed the ruin of the Blennerhassetts.

If Blennerhassett had never seen Aaron Burr, he must have run through his fortune in a few years — for he was living far beyond his income, and was singularly destitute of the ability to add to his capital. Moreover, he probably lost less in pro-

portion to his means than any other of Burr's leading confederates.

The passage from Mr. Wirt's speech, which is quoted above, always appealed strongly to Burr's sense of the ridiculous. It was a standing joke with him for the rest of his life. He laughed over the recollection of it a thousand times. In the company of familiar friends, he would repeat the most exaggerated parts of the speech, and then narrate, with a kind of humorous exactness, the actual facts of his connection with Blennerhassett, which were as different from Wirt's version of them as fact ever is from romantic fiction.

But to return to the court-room.

On Saturday evening, August 29th, the great debate was concluded in an impressive speech by Mr. Randolph. The court adjourned. On Monday morning, the Chief Justice was ready with his decision, which every one felt would decide the case, as well as the motion to exclude further testimony. An overt act had certainly not been shown; and if the prosecution were debarred from adding testimony showing criminal intention, the case must go at once to the jury, who could not hesitate a moment to acquit the prisoner. The breathless interest with which the bar, the prisoner, and the auditors, listened to the great judge's clear and cogent reasoning, may be imagined.

"The question now to be decided," he began, "has been argued in a manner worthy of its importance, and with an earnestness evincing the strong conviction felt by the counsel on each side that the law is with them. A degree of eloquence seldom displayed on any occasion, has embellished a solidity of argument and a depth of research, by which the court has been greatly aided in forming the opinion it is about to deliver." With this brief introduction, he proceeded at once to grapple with the subject, and discussed it in so masterly a manner, that one ignorant of law may read the decision still with interest and pleasure, merely as an essay on the nature and evidence of treason. The reading lasted nearly three hours. As he was about to close, the Chief Justice alluded to the remarks which had fallen from all the coun

sel at different times, respecting the *political* considerations which might sway the mind of a judge in deciding a case like that then before the court. He made this allusion with excellent taste and judgment. The reader will peruse with admiration the closing paragraphs of this celebrated decision.

"Much has been said in the course of the argument on points on which the court feels no inclination to comment particularly; but which may, perhaps, not improperly receive some notice.

"That this court dares not usurp power is most true. That this court dares not shrink from its duty is not less true. No man is desirous of placing himself in a disagreeable situation. No man is desirous of becoming the peculiar subject of calumny. No man, might he let the bitter cup pass from him without self-reproach, would drain it to the bottom. But if he have no choice in the case, if there be no alternative presented to him but a dereliction of duty or the opprobrium of those who are denominated the world, he merits the contempt as well as the indignation of his country who can hesitate which to embrace

"That gentlemen, in a case the most interesting, in the zeal with which they advocate particular opinions, and under the conviction in some measure produced by that zeal, should on each side press their arguments too far, should be impatient at any deliberation in the court, and should suspect or fear the operation of motives to which alone they can ascribe that deliberation, is perhaps a frailty incident to human nature; but if any conduct on the part of the court could warrant a sentiment that it would deviate to the one side or the other from the line prescribed by duty and by law, that conduct would be viewed by the judges themselves with an eye of extreme severity, and would long be recollected with deep and serious regret.

"The arguments on both sides have been intently and deliberately considered. Those which could not be noticed, since to notice every argument and authority would swell this opinion to a volume, have not been disregarded. The result of the whole is a conviction, as complete as the mind of the

court is capable of receiving on a complex subject, that the motion must prevail.

"No testimony relative to the conduct or declarations of the prisoner elsewhere and subsequent to the transaction on Blennerhassett's Island can be admitted; because such testimony, being in its nature merely corroborative, and incompetent to prove the overt act in itself, is irrelevant until there be proof of the overt act by two witnesses.

"This opinion does not comprehend the proof by two witnesses that the meeting on Blennerhassett's Island was procured by the prisoner. On that point the court for the present withholds its opinion for reasons which have been already assigned; and as it is understood from the statements made on the part of the prosecution that no such testimony exists. If there be such, let it be offered; and the court will decide upon it.

"The jury have now heard the opinion of the court on the law of the case. They will apply that law to the facts, and will find a verdict of guilty or not guilty as their own consciences may direct."

When the judge ceased, and the irrepressible buzz of excitement which arose in the court-room had subsided, Mr. Hay requested time for himself and his associates to reflect upon the decision. No one objecting, the court adjourned until the next morning, when Mr. Hay intimated his willingness to let the case go to the jury without further remark. The jury retired. In a few minutes, they returned with the following irregular verdict, which was read by the foreman:

"We, of the jury, say that Aaron Burr is not proved to be guilty under the indictment by any evidence submitted to us. We, therefore, find him not guilty."

Colonel Burr rose and, in a manner more like vehemence than he had before exhibited, protested against the form of the verdict, and demanded that it be rendered in the usual terms. An animated conversation arose, in which prisoner, judge, counsel, and jury, all took part; and, at length, as some of the jury would not consent to an alteration, the matter was

compromised by accepting the verdict as rendered, but entering it on the record, simply, "not guilty."

A messenger bore the news of the acquittal to Theodosia. While her father was insisting upon his right to a more ample vindication at the hands of the jury, she was writing the intelligence to a dear friend, the wife of one of her mother's sons, in whose family archives it is still preserved. I am permitted to copy the part of it which relates to Colonel Burr:

"I have this moment received a message from court announcing to me that the jury has brought in a verdict of acquittal, and I hasten to inform you of it, my dear, to allay the anxiety which, with even more than your usual sweetness, you have expressed in your letter of the 22d of July. It afflicts me, indeed, to think that you should have suffered so much from sympathy with the imagined state of my feelings — for the knowledge of my father's innocence, my ineffable contempt for his enemies, and the elevation of his mind, have kept me above any sensations bordering on depression. Indeed, my father, so far from accepting of sympathy, has continually animated all around him; it was common to see his desponding friends filled with alarm at some new occurrence, terrified with some new appearance of danger, fly to him in search of encouragement and support, and laughed out of their fears by the subject of them. This I have witnessed every day, and it almost persuaded me that he possessed the secret of repelling danger as well as apprehension. Since my residence here, of which some days and a night were passed in the penitentiary, our little family circle has been a scene of uninterrupted gayety. Thus you see, my lovely sister, this visit has been a real party of pleasure. From many of the first inhabitants I have received the most unremitting and delicate attentions, sympathy, indeed, of any I ever experienced."

The news was received by Mr. Jefferson with very different feelings. He wrote immediately to Mr. Hay, telling him to let no witness depart without taking a copy of his evidence, which, said he, is "*now more important than ever!*" thus intimating, that the real object of the prosecution was not so

much to convict Aaron Burr of treason, as to acquit Thomas Jefferson of precipitate and ridiculous credulity. "The criminal," continued the President, "is preserved to become the rallying-point of all the disaffected and worthless of the United States, and to be the pivot on which all the intrigues and conspiracies which foreign governments may wish to disturb us with, are to turn. If he is convicted of the misdemeanor, the judge must in decency give us respite by some short confinement of him; but we must expect it to be very short. Be assured yourself, and communicate the same assurance to your colleagues, that your and their zeal and abilities have been displayed in this affair to my entire satisfaction and your own honor."

But the prisoner was not convicted of "the misdemeanor." The day after being acquitted of treason he was released from prison on bail, and the proceedings on the charge of misdemeanor began. Colonel Burr and his counsel contended, in a debate of many hours, that a man can not lawfully be tried twice for the same offense; and that the verdict of the jury entitled him to a complete discharge. It was decided otherwise, however, and the new trial lingered day after day, week after week, with reams of argument upon every point, until the last week in October. Wilkinson was examined, and told his story. Much has been made by the friends of Burr of Wilkinson's admission that he made certain slight alterations in the cipher-letter, and then swore that his version of it was a true deciphering of the original. The admission may condemn Wilkinson, but does not exonerate Burr, because the alterations do not affect the general drift of the letter — do not affect the fact that Aaron Burr, who plumed himself upon his soldierly honor, tried to induce a soldier to adopt a course of proceeding which was contrary to the known policy of the government, whose commission he held, and whose uniform he wore. Not hastily would I condemn a man whose errors were expiated as no man's ever were expiated before, and upon whom the craven rhetoricians have delighted to heap opprobrious epithets. But so much must be admitted: As long as the cipher-letter, as deciphered by the grand jury, exists unex

plained, so long must Aaron Burr be denied a place in the catalogue of those who have attempted great enterprises by honorable means alone.

He was acquitted of the charge of misdemeanor, on the ground that the offense was not committed in Virginia, but in Ohio. Burr communicated the result to his daughter, who had returned to South Carolina, in these words: "After all, this is a sort of drawn battle. The Chief Justice gave his opinion on Tuesday. After declaring that there were no grounds of suspicion as to the treason, he directed that Burr and Blennerhassett should give bail in three thousand dollars for further trial in Ohio. This opinion was a matter of regret and surprise to the friends of the Chief Justice, and of ridicule to his enemies — all believing that it was a sacrifice of principle to conciliate *Jack Cade*. Mr. Hay immediately said that he should advise the government to *desist from further prosecution*. That he has actually so advised, there is no doubt."

Thus, eight months after his arrest in Alabama, and six months after the commencement of his trial at Richmond, he was free once more. The trial had not restored his good name. The ardent Jeffersonians, and all who had any thing to hope from the favor of the administration, denounced him without mercy or moderation — the papers in the interest of the government, of course, leading the cry. If the Federalists seemed to give him a faint support, it was only because to defend Burr was to disgust Jefferson. He was a ruined man. There was no resource left for him in his own country, even if there was a place in it where his person would be safe.

Late in the autumn, he went to Baltimore, where he was entertained in princely style by Luther Martin. Mr. Barney tells an anecdote or two respecting his stay in Baltimore. One day, while he was dining with a large company at Luther Martin's house, a military company, with a band playing a lively air, passed the house. It was supposed that the company intended to compliment Colonel Burr, who, accordingly rose from the table, threw open the window, and gracefully bowed to them.

"Why, colonel," exclaimed a humorous fellow in the room, "they are playing the Rogue's March, with charged bayonets!"

The windows were quickly closed, the company returned to their wine, and voted the captain of the company to be a very officious individual. "The next day," continues Barney, "strolling down Market-street, arm in arm with my persecuted friend, Mr. Hughes overtook us. 'Colonel,' said he, 'pass Light-street without looking down — Fountain Inn is surrounded by groups of your admiring friends. Captain Frailey is out of uniform to-day, but there is a general desire manifested to give you a warm reception in citizens' clothes. You must take your departure without further civil or military honors being conferred upon you.' With his accustomed celerity of action and excellent judgment, the colonel called a hack and jumped into it.

"'Colonel, my friend Barney will accompany you. You will have a pleasant drive out to Herron's Run. I will secure a seat in the stage coach, take charge of your baggage, swop you for my friend Barney, bring him home, and send you on your way to rejoice escaping being hustled by a Baltimore mob.'

"Colonel Burr intimated that he was too old a soldier to run away, in that manner, from a lawless mob. 'That is all fine bravado,' said Hughes; 'Barney and I have no desire to shoot down, or be shot by our fellow-citizens. You may throw your life away, colonel, but this bright world has too many attractions for us to throw away ours in defending you, when a pleasant ride of half an hour will save you from danger, and restore us to our affectionate parents.'"

He yielded, and was seen no more in Baltimore.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE EXILE.

HIS RESIDENCE IN ENGLAND.

SAILS FOR ENGLAND — PARTING WITH THEODOSIA — INTERVIEWS WITH CANNING, CASTLEREAGH, AND MULGRAVE — THREATENED WITH EXPULSION FROM ENGLAND — CLAIMS TO BE A BRITISH SUBJECT — HIS SUCCESS IN SOCIETY — CHARLES LAMB — BENTHAM — ANECDOTES OF BURR AND BENTHAM — HIS OCCUPATIONS IN LONDON — PLANS FOR RETRIEVING HIS FORTUNES — SAMUEL SWARTWOUT'S SCHEME — BURR'S TOUR IN THE NORTH — A MONTH IN EDINBURG — THREATENED WITH ARREST.

AT that time, as now, British mail-packets sailed from New York and called at Halifax on their way to England. The *Clarissa* was the packet for June, 1808. Among the twenty-six passengers who overcrowded the cabin of the *Clarissa* on that voyage, was a silent, reading, gentlemanlike person, who appeared in the passenger list as *G. H. Edwards.* He occupied a third part of a small state-room, and paid sixty guineas for his passage. There was no Mr. Edwards on board when the ship left her wharf at New York, but as she lay at anchor one evening in the lower bay waiting for a fair wind, a pilot-boat swept round her bows, and lay to while a skiff conveyed another passenger to her side. It was known to no one but the captain that this passenger, announced as the expected Mr. Edwards, was Aaron Burr.

For a month previous he had been concealed in New York, or its vicinity, at the houses of his friends. His movements during that period were shrouded in mystery. His conduct was that of a man fearing arrest for a capital offense, rather than that of one who had just been acquitted. Theodosia was in the city. Letters passed between the father and daughter daily, in which plans for meeting were discussed with the caution of conspirators. He wrote every note apparently in fear that it would be intercepted. "If we should not meet to-day,"

he tells her on one occasion, "I shall write something in which I shall speak of you in the third person, under the name of Anne."

During this hurried and anxious month he is still his daughter's tutor and thoughtful adviser. He gently reproves her for not acknowledging the receipt of each article of his last enclosure, and says he thought she was long ago cured of that negligent way of answering a letter. He praises the fortitude with which she supports the agony of the coming separation. He commends her epistolary style. "There is," he says, "a selection, an energy, and aptitude in your expressions, which, to use the vulgar male slang, *is not feminine.*" He tells her, that while he is in Europe he may put her in correspondence with literary characters, and cautions her against taking the tone of one who feels herself flattered by such a correspondence. Of all animals, he says, authors are the vainest; no eulogies of their works can be too gross, or too often repeated. Yet he advises her to be discriminate in her praise, selecting the real merits of a work for remark, which will both prove her discernment and save her sincerity. All such letters, he adds, will be sure at some time or other to get into print. He tenderly prepared her for the last interview, which he feared would be more than she could bear. One whole night, he assures her, they shall be together before the final separation. "Make haste," he said, "to gather strength for the occasion; your efforts on the late interview were wonderful, and God grant they may not have exhausted you!" The dreaded evening arrived. The last words of love, and grief, and hope were spoken; the father tore himself from his daughter's arms, and stole away to the boat that was in waiting to convey him down the harbor to the Long Island shore.

Burr used every precaution to conceal his departure. He left with Mrs. Alston the outline of a paragraph to be set afloat in the papers after the ship had sailed, to the effect that on a certain day Colonel Burr, with one Frenchman and two Americans, had passed through a designated place on his way to Canada. He left the city on the 1st of June, but the ship did not sail till the 9th. Those days of waiting he passed on

the shores of the harbor, crossing occasionally from Long Island to Staten Island, and visiting such friends in the neighborhood as were in his secret. Like a criminal, he fled from the country which had once delighted to honor him — from the city in whose counsels his voice had been potential, and of whose society he had been esteemed an ornament.

At Halifax he received letters of introduction from Sir George Prevost to his family and friends in England; also, a passport certifying that "G. H. Edwards was bearer of dispatches to the Right Honorable Lord Castlereagh, at whose office he was immediately to present himself on his arrival in London." Thirty-five days after leaving New York, the packet anchored in the harbor of Falmouth, and on the 16th of July, 1808, Colonel Burr was in London. On his arrival, he was at once domesticated in the family of the Prevosts, the relatives of his late wife, and of Theodosia.

On the very day which brought Colonel Burr within sight of the cliffs of Albion, Joseph Bonaparte entered Madrid as King of Spain. This was the first public news of importance that reached London after Burr's arrival. He must have heard the intelligence with dismay, for a man so acute as he must have discerned that such an event was death, or long postponement, to his dearest hopes.

He went to Europe with the design of laying before the cabinet of England, or the Emperor of France, his plans for the independence of Mexico, and of procuring, at least, the *authorization* of one of them for carrying out his schemes of personal aggrandizement and elevation in that country. But Joseph Bonaparte's assumption of the Spanish throne was precisely the event, of all others conceivable, to absolutely close the ears of *both* governments to such an application. England, before on ill terms with Spain, promptly took the part of the dethroned king, and sent the flower of her armies to the Peninsular war. England was publicly and irrevocably committed to the cause of the exiled monarch, and, of course, to the integrity of his dominions. To ask Napoleon's consent to the independence of Mexico would have seemed something like soliciting his consent to the partition of the

French empire. Mexico was part of the kingdom which he ruled through his brother Joseph. Mexico was *his*. If he had been disposed to give it away, an adventurer from far off America would not have been the selected recipient. A multitude of political combinations can be imagined which would have rendered one or the other of the hostile governments an eager listener to the bland and able representations of Aaron Burr. Unfortunately for him, perhaps unfortunately for Mexico, affairs took the turn which excluded his proposals even from consideration.

But Burr was not a man to yield without an effort. He proceeded immediately to business. He had interviews with Mr. Canning, Lord Castlereagh, Lord Mulgrave, and many other official persons, to whom his plans were made known. He received not the slightest encouragement. One of his first letters to his daughter announced, that "Mexico had been abandoned." "This certainly was inevitable," replied the fond Theodosia; "but I can not part with what has so long lain near my heart, and not feel some regret, some sorrow. No doubt there are many other roads to happiness, but this appeared so perfectly suitable to you, so complete a remuneration for all the past, it so entirely coincided with my wishes relative to you, that I cherished it as my comfort, even when illness scarcely allowed me any hope of witnessing its completion. My knowledge of your character, however, consoles me greatly. You will not remain idle. The situation in which you are placed would excite apathy itself, and your mind needs no external impulse."

It was not even certain that the adventurer would be permitted to reside in England. After a few weeks of active exertion in London, he received one day, as he was leaving for the country, a very pointed *request* from Lord Hawkesbury, one of the Secretaries of State, that he should present himself forthwith at the Home Office. He went. What transpired is not precisely known. But his right to live in England was so seriously called in question, that he was driven to demand it on the ground that he was born, and still remained, *a British subject*. Lord Hawkesbury pronounced the claim monstrous.

But Burr was the better lawyer of the two, and knew well the peculiarities of British laws respecting citizenship. The question puzzled the whole cabinet, was referred to the law officers of the crown, and was some months in arriving at settlement. Meanwhile, the claimant lived and wandered in England at his pleasure. Such a claim, from a man who had been for four years in arms against the King of England, and who had filled the second office in that victorious republic, whose creation dismembered the British empire, was an amusing instance of Burr's lawyerly audacity.*

Colonel Burr, then, was not a historical person in Europe, the great events of the time submerging his public schemes. Yet I think it worth while to narrate with some minuteness his personal adventures in the old world, because many of them were highly curious and characteristic, and the narrative affords an occasional glimpse of the most stirring time this century has known.

Europe was in arms. Every human interest was subordinate to the gigantic Napoleonic wars. Napoleon was near the pinnacle of his greatness. During this very autumn, Burr's first season in Europe, the French emperor was the central figure of that dazzling congress of Erfurth, where he and the Czar Alexander met on the raft in the middle of the river, and vowed eternal friendship, two armies looking on. Baffled England was still resolute to hurl the parvenu down. Before the year closed, Napoleon was in Spain, driving before him Sir John Moore and the English army, in that terrible retreat which Wolfe's song has made familiar to posterity; and England had diplomatized a new coalition against the conqueror which summoned him from victory in the Peninsula to

* The most absurd reports of his designs in England reached America. Jefferson wrote, October 17th, 1808: "Burr is in London, and is giving out to his friends that that government offers him two millions of dollars the moment he can raise an ensign of rebellion as big as a handkerchief. Some of his partisans will believe this, because they wish it. But those who know him best will not believe it the more because he says it. For myself, even in his most flattering periods of the conspiracy, I never entertained one moment's fear."

victory more splendid on the Danube; to victory which placed the Austrian empire at his mercy, and gave him the fatal hand of Marie Louise. The breach between England and the United States was widening, and the war of 1812 was casting its baleful shadow before. The British attack on the American frigate *Chesapeake*, and the consequent embargo, were recent events. The passage by Congress of the non-intercourse act was only one year distant. Communication with every part of the world was difficult, and traveling on the continent of Europe was obstructed, where it was not impossible. During the years of Colonel Burr's residence in Europe, no essential change occurred in the politics or the position of the great powers. The world was filled with the noise of war.

Burr's success in the society of the British metropolis may be called brilliant. The men best worth knowing were among his intimate friends; and in the most exclusive circles he was a frequent and welcome guest. His fame had gone before him. He was sometimes introduced as "the celebrated Colonel Burr." His "affair with Hamilton" was well known in London, as were also his recent high rank in the United States, his downfall, and his trial for treason. With many of the higher officers of the government we find him intimate during the whole period of his stay in Europe. He had the *entrée* of Holland House, then the center of a brilliant opposition, and the resort of wit and genius. He was intimate with the Earl of Bridgewater, son of the earl famous for his devotion to the canal system. Godwin was his frequent associate, to whom he owed an acquaintance with Charles Lamb. There is this too brief narration of Lamb in Burr's Diary: "Agreed with Madame Godwin for rendezvous at Mr. Lamb's rooms. He is a writer, and lives with a maiden sister, also literaire, in a fourth story." Lamb was then but in his thirty-third year, and known only to a literary coterie. Faseli, the painter, was another of Burr's acquaintances in London. With the higher powers he had influence enough, during his first three months in England, to procure a midshipman's warrant for the son of a lady whom he wished to oblige. The reader will, indeed, observe that into whatever city or country Colonel Burr went,

he took his place at once in its highest circle, and associated chiefly with the people most truly eminent. This was the case, too, when his lodgings were not nameable to West-End ears, when he lived upon potatoes, and was hungry because his stock was gone, and his exchequer, reduced to two half pence, could not afford a replenishment.

Jeremy Bentham was Burr's dearest friend in England, though it was only by accident that he became acquainted with him. Bentham was a man of fortune who devoted the leisure that wealth confers to pursuits which dignify, if they do not justify, the possession of independent wealth. *The greatest happiness of the greatest number* was a phrase which his youthful eye had caught from "the tail of one of Priestley's pamphlets," and his life was spent in writing treatises which applied that principle to the laws and institutions of States.* The philosopher was now more than sixty years old, but (so slow is the growth of a lasting fame), his works were known only to the thoughtful few. Burr used to say that no one in the United States appreciated Jeremy Bentham's ideas except himself and Albert Gallatin. To Theodosia, in happier days, he had been accustomed to speak of Bentham as "second to no man, ancient or modern, in profound thinking, in logical and analytic reasoning." The fortunate accident which brought him into personal relations with his favorite author is related by M. Dumont, who translated Bentham's works into French.

"I have met," wrote Dumont to Bentham, "with a person in London enjoying a celebrity which is somewhat embarass-

* "Bentham himself, and even the creed of Bentham, seems to me comparatively worthy of praise. It is a determinate *being* what all the world, in a cowardly, half-and-half manner, was tending to be. Let us have the crisis; we shall have either death or the cure. I call this gross steam-engine utilitarianism an approach toward new faith. It is a laying down of cant; a saying to one's self, 'Well, then, this world is a dead iron machine, the god of it Gravitation and selfish Hunger; let us see what, by checking and balancing, and good adjustment of tooth and pinion, can be made of it.' Benthamism has something complete, manful, in such fearless committal of itself to what it finds true; you may call it Heroic, though a Heroism with its *eyes* put out."—CARLYLE: *Heroes and Hero Worship.*

ing to him, and from which he has retreated into a capital two thousand leagues from his home. This is Mr. Edwards in London; in America, it was Mr. Burr. We met at dinner — acquaintance was soon established between us; and as soon as he heard me named, he inquired with an air of surprise and of satisfaction, if I were the person to whom he was indebted for his acquaintance with the writings of Bentham. He had read 'Principles,' and 'Usury,' and as soon as he saw the announcement at Paris, had sent for sundry copies. He spoke of them with the strongest admiration — said they were the only works on legislation where there was philosophical method; that, compared to these, Montesquieu's writings were trifling, etc. He added that, in spite of his recommendations, they were little read in America, where any thing requiring studious application is neglected. Nobody but Gallatin had felt all their merit, and Gallatin was the best head in the United States. Mr. Burr was anxiously desirous of knowing the author — of passing a day with him; this, said he, would be a satisfaction for the rest of his life. He passes all the autumn in England, but does not know how long beyond. If you are disposed to receive him, whether in town or country, let me give him the happy news, and I think you will not be sorry you have seen him. You may tell me, his duel with Hamilton was a savage affair; but he has no desire whatever to break your head."

Bentham, who was extremely susceptible to appreciation, made the desired response. Colonel Burr was invited to Barrow Green, near London, where the sage was then staying, and "great," says Bentham's biographer, "was his joy on receiving the invitation." Bentham ordered a horse to be sent to London to convey him to the country, but Burr had provided a horse of his own.

In Bentham's own reminiscences, we find only brief allusion to his intimacy with Burr. "I was brought acquainted," he says, "with Colonel Aaron Burr thus: he had given a general order to a bookseller to forward whatever books I should publish. I was then very little known. This was very good evidence of analogy between his ideas and mine. He came

here expecting this government to assist his endeavors in Mexico; but the government had just then made up their quarrel with Spain. We met; he was pregnant with interesting facts. He gave me hundreds of particulars respecting Washington. In those days, I used to go to Oxstead, where there is a handsome gentleman's house, called Barrow Green, which was occupied by Koe's eldest brother. Burr went there with me; and once, when I went to Barrow Green, I lent him my house in Queen Square Place. He really meant to make himself emperor of Mexico. He told me I should be the legislator, and he would send a ship of war for me. He gave me an account of his duel with Hamilton. He was sure of being able to kill him; so I thought it little better than a murder. He seemed to be a man of prodigious intrepidity; and if his project had failed in Mexico, he meant to set up for a monarch in the United States.* He said the Mexicans would all follow like a flock of geese."

These temperate words (written years after) give no idea of the warmth of their friendship. In a few days, we find Colonel Burr living at Bentham's house, on the most affectionate terms with its master. His letters of this period are filled with allusions to his "great and good friend, Jeremy Bentham," of whom he seldom spoke but with enthusiasm. To Theodosia he said: "I am now writing in Mr. Bentham's room, and by his side. He wills it so, insisting that there is a sort of social intercourse in sitting near, and looking now and then at one another, though we are separately and ever so intensely employed. It is certainly so." In another letter, he told Theodosia that "Mr. Bentham's countenance had all that character of intense thought which she would expect to find; but it was impossible to conceive a physiognomy more strongly marked with ingenuousness and philanthropy. He is about sixty, but cheerful even to playfulness." To Governor Alston, he wrote: "He is, indeed, the most perfect model that I have seen or imagined of moral and intellectual excellence. He is the most intimate friend I have in this coun-

* The old gentleman's memory was at fault here.

try, and my constant associate." To Mrs. Prevost: "He must be dead a hundred years before he will be known; and then he will be adored."

Burr made every body whom he loved love his daughter; and so we soon see Bentham sending a set of his "combustibles" (works) to "my dear little Theodosia." She read them with delight. She caught her father's enthusiasm. One of the books, as yet, existed only in the French language, and Theodosia, in that graceful manner which invested all she did with a peculiar charm, solicited the privilege of translating it into English. The sage was enchanted, and the translation was begun.

It is evident that Colonel Burr stood very high in Bentham's regard. John Bowring, Bentham's biographer, says that the philosopher, in consequence of his communication with Colonel Burr, seemed seriously resolved on taking up his abode for some years on the table-lands of Mexico, and was only dissuaded by the extreme difficulty of getting there, and the representations of his friends. Bentham quaintly makes this project known to Lord Holland in a letter, dated October 31, 1808: "I feel myself," he wrote, "so pinched by the cold of our English winters, that a great part of the time that would otherwise be employed in driving the quill, is consumed in thinking of the cold, and endeavoring, but in vain, to keep off that unpleasant sensation without bringing on worse. But is there no heat in fire? Yes; but as it comes from our English fire-places, such is the heat, as neither my eyes, nor other parts about me, are able to endure. Between eyes and feet, perpetual quarrel about heat; feet never can have enough, eyes never little enough — a new edition of the old parable of the members. Mexico, from a variety of authorities, private, as well as public, I have learned to consider as affording a climate by which all such differences would be kept at rest. Temperature just what any body pleases. If you want it warmer, you go *down* a few hundred yards; if cooler, you go *up*."

That so cordial a feeling should have existed between two men who, in some particulars, were as complete contrasts as the

world could furnish, may well excite our surprise. In the very letter to Lord Holland just quoted, Bentham truly describes himself as "completely disqualified for every thing that in French is called Intrigue, or in English Politics." He was also so absent-minded as scarcely to be trusted in the streets alone. An instance of this infirmity used to be related by Colonel Burr, with a keen relish of its absurdity. The philosopher and himself were walking one day in Hyde Park, engaged in grave discourse upon subjects of high import, when, suddenly, the voice of Bentham ceased. Burr looked up. The sage stopped, mused a moment, turned upon his heel, and without one word of explanation, broke into a kind of gentle trot, and trotted homeward, never once looking back to his deserted companion. Burr gazed after him with wonder, but soon guessing the cause of this curious proceeding to be an "idea," merely, he continued his walk alone, and, in the course of an hour or two, went home to Bentham's house. He met the philosopher quite as usual, and neither Bentham nor himself ever alluded to the occurrence. Burr said that any one who should meet Bentham without knowing who he was, would have supposed him to be "a little touched in his upper story."

Bentham himself seems to have been struck by the oddity of such a friendship, and scarcely knew what to make of it. "I do believe," he wrote to Burr, at the end of one of the three-sheeted letters he used to send to him occasionally, "I do believe, that of the regard you have all along professed for me, no inconsiderable part is true. But a man must have his eyes well about him, when he has to deal with leaders of factions and professed men-catchers." And again: "To know that you were in any situation that could turn talents such as yours to the benefit of any considerable part of mankind would afford me the most heartfelt pleasure. In any other I should have said, on the opposite expectation, I can not even profess to give you any good wishes. For the trade of *throat-cutting* I can not see any openings. *Cabbage-planting* would be better, if, haply, any ground were to be got for it." Bentham's letters to Burr were gossipy and rambling, and amazingly

long — equivalent, some of them, to fifteen or twenty pages of foolscap.

Bentham never knew of Colonel Burr's pecuniary straits. Two or three years later, when he was reduced to the last extremity of indigence, he never breathed a syllable of his circumstances to Jeremy Bentham, who was then himself temporarily embarrassed. He visited the sage as usual, but could not tell him, as he did Godwin, the secret of his squalid lodgings. But this is anticipating.

For the present, Colonel Burr passed his time pleasantly enough. It was the era of mechanical inventions. The dream of the day was to do what Fulton had recently done, revolutionize a new branch of industry by a new application of steam. The memoirs and letters of that period, show it to have been *the fashion* to take an interest in things mechanical. Burr, besides the interest, which a man so intelligent as he could not but feel in the inventions of the time, had the idea that by some lucky hit of the kind he might retrieve his own fortunes. The mansion of the Earl of Bridgewater was then the resort of men with mechanical ideas, and we find Colonel Burr staying there a week at a time listening to their expositions. He confesses that he found it a bore. But it became the possible emperor of Mexico to understand the canal system, and he forced himself to attend, and to make the remarks expected of him. On one occasion, he speaks of going out of his way to see the new railroad, on which he beheld with wonder, four horses draw forty-four tons of merchandise. One night he was sleepless with an idea of improving the steam engine.*

* The following letter from Samuel Swartwout (who was also in London) to Burr, is worth inserting on many accounts. It is from the valuable autograph collection of F. J. Dreer, Esq., of Philadelphia, to whose courtesy I am indebted for permission to copy it. The letter is dated London, Thursday, 26th August, 1808, and is addressed to "Colonel Burr, at Mr. Bentham's, Barrow Green."

"Dear Sir: I called yesterday at Mr. Smith's lodgings, Great Marlborough-street, but he was not in town. I left your letter with my address, request-

He led an active life. We catch glimpses of him, in his swift diary, rushing from office to office; "walking fifty miles" to find a suitable present for "Gampillo;" dining with "the ladies of Holland House;" going to the play with the Godwins; talking politics with Bentham; expounding Mexico

ing to know when I should see him. I have heard nothing since. I shall call again to-day.

"I have had a long conversation this morning with a young gentleman, a partner with Strong & Davis, New York, who has come over on business for them, in the last packet. He knows you. His name is John Mills. In the course of conversation he mentioned that the article of *cotton bagging*, which is prohibited by the late law of the United States, is, in the southern States, and in the Territories of Orleans and Mississippi, a dollar a yard. Here it may be bought for 6*d.* sterling. Pray, could not a quantity, say, 200,000 yards, be sent from this country to Mobile or St. Mary's; and thence got into the islands and Territories by smuggling? If your knowledge of the *ground* enables you to manage such a speculation, perhaps it might be accomplished. The immense advance in this article, and its being one of the specially prohibited articles, which, in case the embargo is raised will but increase in price, encourages me to hope that some great speculation might be made in it. Mr. Mills was lately in Charleston, where he purchased a quantity of cotton at 13 cents — nearly 500 bales — and he says the planters will not be able to put up their next crop for want of bagging. The price is now 600 per cent. above the cost here, and the expenses of transportation — and in case the embargo should be taken off, the demand for cotton and the want of bagging — will raise it perhaps double what it now is. The immense profit can not be doubted.

"Would the hazard be greater, or so great, in any other part of the United States?

"Would not the collector at New Orleans let a schooner in with 200,000 yards on board for a couple or three thousand guineas? St. Mary's, I think, would be another charming place to try it. The cost of a whole ship-load, or of 200,000 yards, would be only four to five thousand pounds. A thousand or twelve hundred pounds more, would fit out the vessel, and if she succeeded in getting safe into port and in selling her cargo, the profits would be immense — 600 per cent. This laid out in cotton there, at the present low price, would make another 100 per cent. — so that in all it would be one of the greatest speculations ever made; if, as —— said, it could be effected.

"Have the goodness to let me know by return of the mail, what you think of my wild scheme. I inclose a letter and two cards which will explain themselves.

"Ever affectionately and devotedly yours,
"S. SWARTWOUT"

to men whom the next change of ministers might bring into power; undergoing tortures with his peruke; writing law-papers in support of his claim to be considered a British subject; reading all literature, from Milton on Divorce to the last French farce; conversing with all men, from cabinet ministers to barbers; gallanting all women, from duchesses to chambermaids.

Theodosia was languishing, meanwhile. In November came eloquent, melancholy letters from her to her father. Saratoga, whither she had gone after his departure, had not relieved her depressing complaint. The failure of her father's plans, the uncertainty of his future, and, in particular, the non-payment of a large sum of money due him in New York, on which he depended, racked her noble heart with anxiety. "Return to me," she cried to him across the sea, "or tell me that you are engaged in a pursuit worthy of you." "O, my guardian angel, why were you obliged to abandon me just when enfeebled nature doubly required your care! How often, when my tongue and hands trembled with disease, have I besought Heaven either to reunite us, or let me die at once. Yet do not hence imagine that I yield to infantine lamentations or impatience. As soon as relief from pain restored me in some measure to myself, I became more worthy the happiness of being your daughter." She speaks of her return to New York for the winter, and adds: "My situation will not have the charms we supposed. Indeed, I find that your presence threw a luster on every thing around you. Every thing is gayer, more elegant, more pleasant, where you are." But this was not all the reason why "dear New York," as she sometimes called the home of her happy childhood, was no longer agreeable to her. The daughter had to share the father's odium, though that daughter was the lovely and accomplished Mrs. Alston. "The world," she wrote, "begins to cool terribly around me. You would be surprised how many I supposed attached to me have abandoned the sorry losing game of disinterested friendship." One regrets to see at the end of such letters the signature of "Mary Ann Edwards," and "dear brother" at the beginning; "X" for

Mexico, and "60" for Aaron Burr. But she was obliged to write so.

The father's anxiety was aroused. He consulted the most celebrated physicians of London, who seconded the thought his wish had fathered, in recommending a voyage to Europe for the sick lady. Burr's heart was instantly set upon his daughter's joining him. Preparations were made for her reception with his usual promptness. At every port where she could possibly land measures were taken against her arrival. Bentham offered her his house. General Sir Samuel Bentham, brother of the author, was to take "Gampillus" home to be educated with his own children, whom Burr declared to be the best brought up of all the children he had ever known. The most minute directions were forwarded to Theodosia respecting the voyage, and the course to be pursued on landing. To travel *post* from Falmouth to London, he tells her, will cost twenty-five guineas; but the canal boats from Liverpool have neatly-furnished rooms with fire-places, and go forty or fifty miles a day for less than half the expense of travel by land. He writes to Governor Alston to insure his consent to the voyage, and offering to pay half the expense out of his slender means; for planters were then embarrassed. His care and forethought for her were, indeed, all that the most affectionate of fathers could bestow upon the most beloved of daughters. In one of his letters to her, written about this time, there is a touching passage. He is telling her that he is always in danger of being too late with his letters for America. "My letters to others," he adds, "are always ready; but toward *you*, a desire to say something at the last moment; a reluctance resembling that of parting — but all this you know and feel."

His project was never carried out. As the winter drew on, her disease took a favorable turn, and the proposed voyage was given up. How much better it might have been for both father and child if they had come together then! In the spring she went home to South Carolina, whence three times the climate had driven her. "I would not have tried a fourth experiment of the kind upon a dog," wrote Colonel Burr in

wrath when he heard the news. Her health, however, was permanently improved, and his fears were never realized.

Colonel Burr lived in London nearly six months. He was in doubt what to do, or whither to go. To stay in Europe seemed useless; yet nothing had occurred to tempt him home. His desires pointed homeward, and he seems to have hoped to return ere long. Meanwhile, he resolved on making the grand tour of the kingdom, and on the morning of December the 22d, 1808, he set out on his journey northward in the Oxford coach.

The page of his diary in which he describes his departure from the metropolis and his adventures on the road to Oxford, may serve as an illustration of his mode of journalizing. He was too late for the coach, but pursued and overtook it. He continues: — "Found in it one man. Having preserved perfect silence for a few minutes, by way of experiment, I remarked that the day was very mild, which he flatly denied, and in a tone and manner as if he would have bit me. I laughed out heartily, and very kindly inquired into his morning's adventures. He was old, gouty, and very fat. No hack being to be had at that early hour, or, what is more probable, choosing to save the shilling, he had walked from his house to the inn, had fallen twice, got wet and bruised, and was very sure that he should be laid up with the gout for six months. I sympathized with his misfortunes. Wondered at the complacency with which he bore them, and joined him in cursing the weather, the streets, and the hackney coachmen. He became complacent and talkative. Such is John Bull. We took in another fat man, a woman still fatter, and a boy. Afterward, a very pretty, graceful, arch-looking girl, about eighteen, going on a visit to her aunt, Lady W. But mademoiselle was reserved and distant. At the first change of horses she agreed to take breakfast, which we did, tête-à-tête. I was charmed to find her all animation, gayety, ease, badinage. By the aid of drink to the coachman, our companions were kept three quarters of an hour cooling in the coach. They had breakfasted. When we joined them the reserve of my little siren returned. After various fruitless essays, and at first without

suspecting the cause, finding it impossible to provoke any thing beyond a cold monosyllable, I composed myself to sleep, and slept soundly about eight hours, between London and Oxford, where we arrived at eight this evening. (There must be something narcotic in the air of this island. I have slept more during my six months' residence in Great Britain than in any preceding three years of my life since the age of fourteen.) Took leave of my little Spartan. *Mem.*—To write an essay, historical and critical, on the education and treatment of women in England. Its influence on morals and happiness."

He remained a day or two at Oxford, receiving the requisite attentions from residents to whom he had brought letters. He thought "every thing there was more for ostentation than for use." At a dinner given him by one of the Oxonians he agitated the serene atmosphere of the place by praising Bentham. The mention of that name was enough to revive interest in all the great, dividing subjects. Burr found his Oxford friends prepared to concede Bentham's greatness as a legislator, but not as a moralist; whereas *he* extolled his morality and benevolence above all things. The discussion, it appears, grew warm. The subject of divorce came up, Burr defending Bentham's opinions. Religion was discoursed of, Burr arguing against the Gospel according to Oxford. "We then," he says, "got upon American politics, geography, etc., on all of which a most profound and learned ignorance was displayed. The evening wound up pleasantly, and we parted with many expressions of courtesy." Of his entertainer on this occasion, he adds this remark: "Though he speaks of Bentham with reverence, and, probably, prays for him, I presume that he thinks he will be eternally damned, and I have no doubt he expects to be lolling in Abraham's bosom with great complacency, hearing Bentham sing out for a drop of water. Such is the mild genius of our holy religion."

Continuing his journey northward, he is entertained on the road to Birmingham by "a pretty little comely brunette," who had read all the novels and seen all the lions, and whose rank he puzzled himself in vain to determine. At length they put her down at a respectable farm house, Burr handed her

in, was introduced to the family as a "gentleman who had been extremely polite to me on the road," and was warmly pressed to stay, and to call on his return. Such an easy power had this man to ingratiate himself with the fair. He went to Stratford to see the tomb of Shakespeare, concerning which visit he only remarks, that the *bar-maid* gave him a very detailed account of the late Shakespearean jubilee. At Birmingham he enters in his diary some mysterious hints of a gay street adventure which cost him twenty-eight shillings, for which he tells Theodosia he atoned by taking a cheap outside place to Edinburg, instead of a dear inside one.

At Edinburg, where he remained a month, his life was a ceaseless round of gayety. His London letters and his own celebrity combined to insure him a welcome among the élite of the society at the Scottish capital.

At Edinburg, then a place of brilliant intellect and easy virtue, Colonel Burr was a drawing-room and dinner-table lion. Parties, balls, assemblies, dinners, plays, succeeded one another. Edinburg, he said, was the most social and hospitable place he had ever seen: they meet to amuse and to be amused, and they succeed. He gave himself up to the enjoyments of the hour to a degree not usual with him. He told Bentham, to whom he wrote nearly every day, that in his present "state of nullity," he wished to be forgotten by all his friends, till he could "rise to view" in a form worthy of their hopes. For a month, business was forgotten.

With the legal and the literary magnates of the town he soon became intimate. Mackenzie, author of the "Man of Feeling," was then at the height of his reputation, and Walter Scott was in the *Marmion* period of his literary career. "I met both frequently," wrote Burr to Theodosia, "and from both received civilities and hospitalities. Mackenzie has twelve children; six daughters, all very interesting, and two very handsome. He is remarkably sprightly in company amiable, witty; might pass for forty-eight, though certainly much older. Scott, with less softness than Mackenzie, has still more animation; talks much, and very agreeably. May be about forty." He found warm friends among the lawyers

and judges of Edinburg, with some of whom he continued to correspond for years after. At one dinner party, composed chiefly of legal gentlemen, he spoke so convincingly in praise of Bentham, that most of the company took a list of his works on the spot. He was the champion of Bentham wherever he went. He wrote to the philosopher: "When I find a man who knows nothing of you, which (with blushes be it said) has sometimes happened, I pity him; but when one, pretending a knowledge of your works, uses 'very able, very ingenious,' or any such trite epithets, I hate him, and am disposed to quarrel."

This month in Edinburg was the most triumphant, if not the happiest, period of Colonel Burr's long residence in Europe. Besides being "loaded with civilities" there, he heard that Cobbett,* "deeply impregnated with the magnitude of his talents as a statesman and soldier," was consulting with other friends in London how the ex-Vice-President of the United States could be brought into the British Parliament. Bentham shook his more sagacious head, however. He thought the oath of allegiance taken by Burr to the American government was a circumstance fatal to the project; which, indeed, was never more than talked of.

From the gayeties of Edinburg, Colonel Burr was unexpectedly summoned by letters from London, which gave him a gleam of hope. Back he flies to London at the beginning of February, and is at once immersed in "X.'s affairs." We find him soon closeted with Lord Melville, a man famous in the politics of that day, who had expressly, and unsolicited, invited Colonel Burr to his house for the purpose of learning more of his plans. The interview was long, and agreeable to both. "Lord Melville," said Burr, afterward, "is a man I understand, and by whom I could be understood." Nothing of importance, however, came of the interview, or could come of an interview with any man in Europe, while European affairs remained as they were; and the decisive change was still five years distant. Transient, indeed, was this revival of his dream. In March, Burr wrote that he saw clearly that his

* Cobbett had been a friend of Burr's in the United States.

longer stay in Europe was useless, and announced his intention to return to America after the arrival of the next packet. The packet came, but still the adventurer lingered.

It was in these days that he caught his first glimpse of that demon of Impecuniosity, which afterward haunted him so pertinaciously, and which he battled with such indomitable gayety and spirit. He had bought some books for Governor Alston of a London bookseller, the remittance for the payment of which had not arrived, and Burr was threatened with arrest for the amount. But his exchequer was running low. (The very passage-money which brought him to England was borrowed from Dr. Hosack, who accompanied Hamilton to the scene of the duel.) A month ago he had told Theodosia, in his dark manner, that "59 was not immediately wanted, though the want of *him* had prevented an experiment he wished to make in X.'s affairs;" a communication which becomes intelligible when we substitute the word *money* for "59." But the payment of such a sum as two hundred pounds was out of the question. He accordingly removed his residence from the hospitable house of Jeremy Bentham to lodgings much more obscure, and changed his name to Kirby. "The benevolent heart of J. B.," said Burr in his diary, "shall never be wrung by the spectacle of Gamp's arrest." The affair was compromised soon after, and "Gamp" was never arrested *for debt*.

Early in the following month occurred an event which obliged him to come to a very prompt decision with regard to his future course. Cobbett must have smiled when he heard of it, and thought of his consultation with Bentham upon the practicability of getting Burr into Parliament.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

EXPULSION FROM GREAT BRITAIN, AND RESIDENCE IN SWEDEN.

His Arrest — Compelled to Leave the Country — Letter to Lord Liverpool Sails for Sweden — Arrival in Stockholm — His Residence in Stockholm — His Impressions of Sweden — Pleasant Incident.

It was the 4th of April, 1809. Mr. "Kirby" had been for some weeks in his new lodgings. Certain indications of his being under *surveillance* had not escaped his notice, and a vague sense of impending disaster had oppressed him at times. The feeling grew so strong that, on the morning of the day above named, he resolved to remove to another part of the town. He had packed up his clothes and papers, and was about to seek other apartments, when he was surprised by the entrance, unannounced, and without knocking, of four coarse-looking men, who bluntly informed him that they had a warrant for his arrest, and for the seizure of his papers. He asked to see the warrant. They refused to show it. He peremptorily demanded to know by whose authority they acted. Upon this, they produced the warrant, and permitted him to glance over it, but not to read it through. He saw that it was signed *Liverpool*, the name of the premier. He was a prisoner of state.

The men took possession of his trunks, ransacked the room for papers, and threw all that they found, with all other loose articles, into a sack. Then, calling a coach, they conveyed the prisoner and his property to the alien office, the head of which, Mr. John Reeves, was one of Colonel Burr's most intimate friends. The prisoner, refusing to leave the carriage, sent in a note to Mr. Reeves, stating what had occurred, and asking an explanation. No answer for an hour. It was a cold afternoon, and the prisoner grew impatient. He sent another

note urgently requesting Reeves to come to the carriage, and spare him the mortification of entering the office as a prisoner. Mr. Reeves appeared, but he could give no explanation, and, after advising the prisoner to be patient, reëntered the office. After another half hour of waiting, orders came for him to be taken to the house of a Mr. Hughes, one of the government messengers, who was to be responsible for his safe-keeping. Upon hearing this, Colonel Burr alighted, and went to the office of one of the under secretaries, in the same building, bent on discovering the cause and motive of his arrest. But neither the under secretary nor any of the clerks would recognize him; though, says Burr to Theodosia, "every devil of them knew me as well as I know you." He saw that his detention was a thing resolved upon, and not to be avoided, and submitted with a good grace. About four o'clock in the afternoon, he drove away to his temporary prison, at No. 31 Stafford Place, leaving his effects at the alien office, to be examined by the authorities at their leisure.

He dined agreeably enough, with the messenger and his pretty young wife, and afterward read the only two readable books in the house, the play of the Secret, and the Agricola of Tacitus. Then, discovering that his polite jailor played chess, he sat down with him to the game, and played till the man was almost crazed with excitement. Toward morning, he wrote in his diary a brief history of the day's adventures and went to bed.

The next day, no change. No one was permitted to see him. He was anxious only on account of his papers; not, he averred, because there were any plots or treasons in them, but because of his "ridiculous journal," and his peculiar correspondence. Chess again with Hughes till the small hours of the morning.

On the third day, an official summons came from the alien office; whither, at ten o'clock in the morning, the prisoner was conducted. Lord Liverpool did not appear, but sent an apology and a message. The apology related to his sudden and unceremonious arrest; the message, couched in the blandest terms, as disagreeable messages frequently are, was to the

effect that the presence of Colonel Burr in Great Britain was embarrassing to his majesty's government, and that it was the wish and expectation of the government that he should remove. A disposition was professed to treat him with personal respect and courtesy. Passports should be furnished; a free passage to any port where British ships might go, was tendered; but the request for his prompt departure was decided. Burr, astonished, desired to be informed of the reasons of this extraordinary conduct. In what had he offended? What was the purpose of his banishment? To all such questions, neither then, nor ever, was any answer whatever vouchsafed.

Burr attributed this summary measure to a desire on the part of the English cabinet to conciliate, by one easy and inexpensive act, the American government and the Spanish Juntas. He said, in a letter written just after his arrest: "Mr. Jefferson, or the Spanish Juntas, or probably both, have had influence enough to drive me out of this country." Perhaps this supposition was correct, and it derives probability from the fact that publicity was immediately given to the whole transaction in the newspapers. Theodosia first heard of her father's expulsion from Great Britain through the newspapers, though he wrote to her by every ship, Yet the reason assigned by Lord Liverpool was sufficient, in those days, to account for the step. His presence must have been *embarrassing* in the extreme. Here was an erratic, mysterious person, known to have revolutionary political designs, an object of suspicion to two governments, both of which Great Britain wished to propitiate; an able, efficient man, moving in the highest circles, changing his name without apparent cause, concealing his residence, and vailing all his movements in silence and ciphers. An embarrassing person truly, particularly in times so critical. Who could tell what schemes were revolving in that active brain? Lord Liverpool, had there been no Mr. Jefferson to soothe and no Juntas to mollify might have felt the presence of such a man embarrassing.

Colonel Burr at once signified his willingness to comply with the "wish and expectation" of the government. In explaining the reason of his ready acquiescence, he used to say

that it would have been easy for him to set the government at defiance, and to maintain his residence; but the political situation of the United States and Great Britain, and some private considerations, induced him to comply. He was then set at liberty, and his effects were restored to him uninjured.

But whither to go? This question was much discussed between Colonel Burr and the government. A formal letter written by him to Lord Liverpool upon the subject may be introduced here in continuance of the narrative. The writing of this epistle seems to have cost him an effort. He told Jeremy Bentham that when he sat down to write it, and essayed to begin, "My lord," his pen stuck in his fingers. "I tried in vain, but could not get it out; so I adopted the stiff, diplomatic third person. *My* lady or *his* lordship does not stick in my savage throat; but my *lord*—the Lord deliver me!" The letter to Lord Liverpool, dated April 20th, 1809, was as follows:

"Mr. Burr's respectful compliments. He lately received from Lord Liverpool an intimation that his (Mr. Burr's) presence was embarrassing to his majesty's government, and that it was the wish and the expectation of the government that he would remove. Without insisting on those rights which, as a natural-born subject, he might legally assert; without permitting himself to inquire whether the motives to the order were personal or political, or whether the apprehensions expressed were real or factitious, and without adverting to the unprovoked indignities which had preceded the order, or to the personal inconveniences which it would impose on him, Mr. Burr at once expressed his determination to gratify the wishes of the government by withdrawing. It being understood that he could not, consistently with his personal safety, visit any country under the control or influence of France, Sweden was thought the most proper asylum; and the gentleman who spoke in his lordship's name, having represented Heligoland as a place whence passages to Sweden could readily be found, Mr. Burr, relying on this assurance, assented to that voyage, and passports were made out accordingly. But it is now ascertained that this assurance was predicated in

error; that there is, in fact, no direct communication between Heligoland and any part of Sweden, and that no such passage could probably be found within many months. Under such circumstances, Mr. Burr presumes that Lord Liverpool will permit the destination to be changed to Gottenburg, and will have the goodness to direct passports to be made for that port. He has reason to believe that the minister of his Swedish majesty to this court will not object."

The point was yielded. The Swedish minister, so far from objecting, took pains to secure him a friendly reception in Sweden. On the 24th of April he sailed from Harwich in the packet, which, in six days, bore him to Gottenburg, a Swedish port three hundred miles from Stockholm. He was soon established in lodgings which, he said, were "commodious," with the single exception that not a soul in the house spoke one word of any language with which he was acquainted.

He experienced the usual exhilaration of being for the first time in a *foreign* country, and sallied eagerly forth to see the town. He found his way to the theater, where he understood not a word, but was "amused by two young girls in boy's clothes, tight pantaloons and short waistcoats, who played admirably" in the pantomime. He adds in his swift, brief way: "Out at ten. Got home, but could not make my host understand that I wanted a dish of tea. After laboring in vain for a quarter of an hour, was obliged to take him out to the house of a Frenchman, who spoke Swedish, and who explained for us. Tea was got very cheerfully. A long pipe and tobacco."

In a few days he left Gottenburg for Stockholm, where he intended to reside during his stay in Sweden. He reached the capital late in the evening of the 11th of May, and finding the inns full, was indebted to a fellow traveler for getting him a room in the house of a mechanic in an alley near the Exchange.

The next day, on presenting some of his letters, he received in superfluity all those attentions which a stranger in a strange land requires. He was soon established as an inhabitant of Stockholm; and played with his usual easy grace the part of the Distinguished Guest in its highest circles. It is a proof

of the facility with which he made his way in society, that before he had been in Stockholm a week, he was dining magnificently with the most exclusive club in the kingdom, and was running about the city trying to borrow a cocked hat and sword to wear on his presentation at court. His mastery of the French stood him in good stead here. An officer of rank, at one of his early parties in Stockholm, told him that he spoke French better than English, and asked him which of the European languages the language of the Americans most resembled? Burr's cool audacity was shown at another grand dinner party, where, on being asked for a toast, he gave, *The Royal Prisoners*, meaning the exiled royal family of Spain. This was for the Spanish embassador, who was present, and who, says Burr, received the toast with exquisite sensibility, and was moved even to tears. He passed his time chiefly in society, his only serious employments being the study of the Swedish laws and the learning of the language. He was almost severed from his former life. There was with him his young friend and coadjutor, Hosack (younger brother of Dr. Hosack) who came with him from London, but they resided apart. Once in Stockholm he was agreeably reminded of his country by learning that two American captains and a young American traveler were in the city, and wished to meet him. The five Americans dined together, "à l' Americaine, on beefsteaks, fish, and potatoes." Once, he conceived suddenly the idea of returning to America and establishing himself at Charleston, near Theodosia; but second thoughts condemned the idea. Occasionally, but not nearly as often as before, he received letters from his daughter. She had no good news to cheer him with. She tells him of her continued disappointment with regard to the receipt of the money which he had meant for his support in Europe. She was "stunned" upon hearing of his "removal from England," and could not enough admire the gay fortitude of his demeanor under circumstances, the mere contemplation of which racked her soul with anxiety. These are her words:

"The accumulated difficulties which pour in upon us would absolutely overwhelm any other being than yourself. Indeed,

I witness your extraordinary fortitude with new wonder at every new misfortune. Often, after reflecting on this subject, you appear to me so superior, so elevated above all other men; I contemplate you with such a strange mixture of humility, admiration, reverence, love, and pride, that very little superstition would be necessary to make me worship you as a superior being: such enthusiasm does your character excite in me. When I afterward revert to myself, how insignificant do my best qualities appear. My vanity would be greater if I had not been placed so near you; and yet my pride is our relationship. I had rather not live than not be the daughter of such a man."

He was, indeed, a man invincible. In all the mass of his journals and letters, there can not be found one word indicative of repining, repentance, or melancholy. Not one. Circumstances often controlled and thwarted, but never for one instant subdued him.

Colonel Burr lived five months in Sweden; three months at Stockholm, and two in traveling about the country. He liked Sweden, and the lively Swedes liked him. To Mr. Gahn, the Swedish consul at New York, a warm and firm friend, to whom he owed the introductions which made his residence in Sweden so pleasant, he wrote in glowing terms of the country.

"I have never known," he said, "in any country or at any time, five months of weather so uniformly fine. The excellence of the roads has been a constant subject of admiration to me; much superior to those of England, and all free of toll. In traveling more than twelve hundred English miles, I have never found a bridge out of order, nor an obstruction in the road which could retard your progress for a second. There is no country in which traveling is at once so cheap, expeditious, and secure. All travelers have borne testimony to Swedish honesty, but no one has attempted to discover the cause of a distinction so honorable. I have sought for it in their laws, in their social and municipal institutions, particularly in the judicial department. There is no country with whose jurisprudence I am acquainted in which personal liberty is *so well secured;* none in which the violation of it is punished

with so much certainty and promptitude; none in which civil justice is administered with so much dispatch and so little expense. These are strong assertions, but I shall bring with me the proofs. It is surprising, it is unaccountable, that a system differing so essentially from every other in Europe, and so fraught with valuable matter, should have remained to this day locked up in the Swedish and Runic tongues, and that not the slightest information on this interesting subject could be found either in English or French. I should have thought that some Swede, from national pride, if not from philanthropy, would have diffused the knowledge of them throughout Europe."

He liked the sensibility of the cultivated Swedes. Of a concert which he attended at Stockholm, he writes in his diary: "Every part was executed extremely to my satisfaction; but what most interested me was the perfect attention, and the uncommon degree of feeling exhibited by the audience. I have nowhere witnessed the like. Every countenance was affected by those emotions to which the music was adapted. In England you see no expression painted on the visage at a concert. All is somber and grim. They cry 'bravo! bravissimo,' with the same countenance that they 'G—d damn.'

To one Swedish custom, however, he objects. "Do remind me," he writes to Theodosia, "to give you a dissertation on locking doors. Every person, of every sex and grade, comes in without knocking. Plump into your bedroom. They do not seem at all embarrassed, nor think of apologizing at finding you in bed, or dressing, or doing—no matter what, but go right on and tell their story as if all were right. If the door be locked and the key outside (they use altogether spring locks here), no matter; they unlock the door, and in they come. It is vain to desire them to knock; they do not comprehend you, and if they do, pay no manner of attention to it. It took me six weeks to teach my old Anna not to come in without knocking; and, finally, it was only by appearing to get into a most violent passion, and threatening to blow out her brains, which she had not the least doubt I would do

without ceremony. I engage she is the only servant in all Sweden who ever knocks. Notwithstanding all my caution, I have been almost every day disturbed in this way, and once last week was surprised in the most awkward situation imaginable. So, madam, when you come to Sevenska, remember to lock the door, and to take the key inside."*

One more mad entry in his journal. He was assailed by bed-bugs: "Got up, and attempted to light candle, but in vain. Had flint and matches, but only some shreds of punk, which would not catch. Recollected a gun which I had had on a very late journey; filled the pan with powder, and was just going to flash it, when it occurred that, though I had not loaded it, some one else might. Tried, and found it a very heavy charge. What a fine alarm it would have made if I had fired. Then poured out some powder on a piece of paper, put the shreds of punk with it, and, after fifty essays, succeeded in firing the powder; but it being quite dark, had put more powder than intended; my shirt caught fire; the papers on my table caught fire; burned my fingers to a blister, the

* To show how differently the same thing affects different minds, I quote the following from one of Bayard Taylor's recent letters from Sweden: "There is something exceedingly primitive and unsophisticated in the manners of these northern people — a straightforward honesty, which takes the honesty of others for granted — a latent kindness and good-will which may at first be overlooked, because it is not demonstrative, and a total unconsciousness of what is called, in highly civilized circles, 'propriety.' The very freedom of manners which, in some countries, might denote laxity of morals, is here the evident stamp of their purity. The thought has often recurred to me — which is the most truly pure and virginal nature, the fastidious American girl, who blushes at the sight of a pair of boots outside a gentleman's bedroom door, and who requires that certain unoffending parts of the body and articles of clothing should be designated by delicately circumlocutious terms, or the simple-minded Swedish women, who come into our bedrooms with coffee, and make our fires while we get up and dress, coming and going during all the various stages of the toilet, with the frankest unconsciousness of impropriety? This is modesty in its healthy and natural development, not in those morbid forms which suggest an imagination ever on the alert for prurient images. Nothing has confirmed my impression of the virtue of the northern Swedes more than this fact, and I have rarely felt more respect for woman, or more faith in the inherent purity of her nature."

left hand, fortunately. It seemed like a general conflagration. Succeeded, however, in lighting my candle, and passed the night, till five this morning, in smoking, reading, and writing this."

The last incident of his Swedish experience was the most agreeable one. A young man, Luning by name, had formed an enthusiastic friendship for Colonel Burr at Stockholm. Something led the warm-hearted Swede to suspect that his friend was embarrassed for money, which, indeed, was the fact toward the close of his residence in Sweden. His purse ran low enough to alarm a man less confident in the resources of his wit. A few days after he had left the country, and left it never to return, he received a letter from Mr. Luning which, in his broken English, ran thus: "It may very easy be the case, that by the behaviour of your agent, who took the —— rix-dolls., or by the interruption of correspondence between Germany and England, you may come in any embarrassment, I take myself the liberty to send you the inclosed letter, at the producing of which Mr. H. Brauer will pay you one thousand marks, Hamburg currency, which you'll please to reimburse when you arrive in England or America. I can not tell you how much I am thankful to Providence for having given me the pleasure to get acquainted with a man whom I admired long ago. I esteemed you before, now I love you."

"Did you ever hear of any thing to equal this, except in novels?" wrote Burr in his diary that night.

As he was leaving Sweden, he learned that he had been the subject of discussion in the newspapers for a considerable time. But his heart and his skin were hardened against newspapers, and he had not the curiosity to inquire what the Swedish editors had to say about him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LOVE-CHASE IN GERMANY, AND JOURNEY TO PARIS.

LEAVES SWEDEN — TWO WEEKS AT COPENHAGEN — AT HAMBURG — CUT BY THE AMERICANS — THE LADY DENTIST — PASSPORTS DELAYED — TOUR IN GERMANY — AT WEIMAR — GOETHE — WIELAND — THE DUCAL COURT — GOETHE'S THEATER — ODD RENCONTER WITH THE DUCHESS — A SERIOUS PASSION — ANECDOTE — AT GOTHA — HIS FAMILIARITY WITH THE DUKE — THE PRINCESS LOUISE — INCIDENTS AT THE FRANKFORT BALL.

COLONEL BURR had taken the bold resolution of attempting to reach Paris, giving out that he feared the Stockholm winter, and was going to Paris as a traveler merely.

He left Sweden on the 21st of October, 1809, in company with the two young New Yorkers, Hosack and Robinson, and crossed in an open boat to Elsinore on the coast of Denmark. On the magnificent terrace there, fronting the sea, he saw with interest the square stone pillar, four feet high, which enjoys the lucrative reputation of marking the tomb of Hamlet. For a day or two the party lingered in the curious, ancient town, and then proceeded to Copenhagen.

Burr spent two weeks at that interesting capital. As was his wont, he became acquainted with every body of importance and saw every thing of interest. Here, too, he found himself to be a well-known person, the leading facts of his life being familiar to well-informed Danes. His stay was rendered the more agreeable by the friendship and hospitality of Mr. Olsen, whom Colonel Burr had formerly known as the Danish embassador to the United States. The libraries and scientific collections of Copenhagen occupied much of the travelers' attention; they are on a stupendous scale considering the resources of the kingdom, and attest its ancient culture. He was making a little collection of coins for his grandson, and

happening to inquire where such things were sold, it was noised abroad that he was learned in the coin-science; a reputation which he found awkward in a city which boasts a collection of forty thousand specimens, and where the subject was pursued with enthusiasm. He was much in the courts of Copenhagen. The "Committees of Conciliation," a feature of the Danish legal system which he greatly admired, were minutely inquired into by him, and he told the learned judge who gave him the information on the subject, that he intended, on his return home, to recommend his countrymen to adopt the idea. But perhaps it was the possible emperor of Mexico who made these inquiries.

From Copenhagen, by easy stages in a wicker wagon, the three Americans made their way to Hamburg; or rather to Altona, the Danish port which adjoins Hamburg. Hamburg itself, being more decidedly under French influence at that time than Denmark, Colonel Burr thought it best to fix his residence in the Danish city, the gates of the two places being only a third of a mile apart.

He had now to encounter a complication of hostile circumstances. For the last six months, he had been out of the great movements of the time, in a safe and peaceful haven. But Hamburg was within the circle of activity, and many Americans were there, merchants, captains, travelers, and others, all of whom proved inimical to him. The ex-Vice-President was *cut* by them all, and other marks of disrespect were shown him. "What a lot of rascals they must be," he wrote, when he heard of their hostility, "to make war on one whom they do not know; or one *who never did harm or wished harm to a human being!* Yet they, perhaps, are not to be blamed, for they are influenced by what they hear." He heard, too, that the news of his intended journey had been announced in the Paris newspapers, and "in a manner no way auspicious." He applied in form for passports to Paris, and discovered that passports to Paris were more easily asked for in those contentious times than obtained. He was kept long waiting for a decisive answer. Weeks slipped by, and his stock of money was exhausted. At one time, in Hamburg, he was literally

penniless. It was then that, against his will and contrary to his intention, he used the bill for a thousand marks sent him by the generous Luning. He was in doubt whether he could continue his journey to the French capital; England was closed against him; his own countrymen abhorred him; he was destitute of resources. It is no wonder that in such circumstances he shrunk from writing home. "What can I write?" he said. "To be silent as to my intended movements would be strange, and to tell the true state of things afflicting to my friends."

But never was he in better spirits. His diary, always lively, becomes, during this period, frolicksome and comic. Pages of it are filled with the ludicrous history of a toothache that racked him for days and nights. He narrates all the various means tried for quelling the rebellion, till he was driven to the only remedy that never fails. He was directed to the residence of a dentist, where he was received with excessive politeness by a gentleman and lady! The *lady* approached him in a lively, officious manner, and was about to apply her hands to his face. Not relishing such an advance at that particular moment, he begged her not to trouble herself, and informed her that he had come to have a tooth drawn.

"Very well, monsieur, it is I who will do the business for you."

"You, madam?"

"Yes, I."

"But, really, is there strength enough in those little hands of yours?"

"You shall see, monsieur."

He submitted. The tooth was drawn with dexterity, and he rewarded the fair operator with a ducat and a kiss.

The best society of Hamburg and Altona threw open wide its doors to the celebrated traveler. Judges, advocates, embassadors, city officials, professors, with their families and friends, were the daily associates of the man whom his countrymen shunned, and who had been lately obliged to pawn his pencil, for lack of the sous wherewith to pay the toll of a bridge. His most interesting acquaintance was Professor

Ebeling, a man prodigiously versed in the statistics of the United States. "His library of American books is nearly as large as all the Richmond Hill library," wrote Burr to his daughter. To this vast collection Colonel Burr was able to add some recent statistics, and a valuable map of Carolina, which were of great use to the learned professor. A warm feeling sprung up between them. Ebeling sent Theodosia a set of his works, and gave Burr valuable introductions to scholars in Germany, whither he was preparing to go. One of these was to "Mr. Niebuhr," whom Ebeling described as "the son of the celebrated Arabian traveler," who is now chiefly known to the world as the father of the historian. Niebuhr was then privy councillor to the king, and had not yet lectured on Roman history.

After much negotiation, and many interviews with embassadors and other magnates, permission to visit Paris reached Colonel Burr, just as he was leaving Denmark for a short tour in Germany. He continued his journey, notwithstanding, and passed six exciting weeks in Germany. He visited Hanover, Brunswick, Gottingen, Gotha, Weimar, Frankfort, and intermediate places; at each of which he saw the most interesting persons.

At Gottingen, he became intimate with Professor Heeren, then in the prime of his celebrity. "Professor Heeren," he wrote in his diary one evening, "told me two very important articles of news. 1st, The divorce of emperor and empress. The manner of it is noble and worthy of him. 2d, *The emperor's assent to the independence of Mexico and the other Spanish colonies.* Now why the devil didn't he tell me of this two years ago?" And why did Aaron Burr linger in Germany when, at last, it *was* told him? We shall see in a moment.

Weimar he reached on the 2d of January, 1810. Five delightful days he passed at that illustrious abode of genius, and saw the great men and great personages, whose residence at Weimar immortalized its name. Goethe, then in his majestic prime, our traveler met several times, and attended an evening party at his nouse; but, unfortunately, adds not a word to the bare mention of the fact. He became somewhat intimate

with "the amiable and good Wieland." He enjoyed a tête-à-tête with the Baroness De Stein. He was presented at court, dined with the ducal family, and took tea with the princely ladies, "all in calico and *en famille*." "The princess Caroline would be happy to see him any morning," said la Baronne De Stein. At the theater, the celebrated theater, Goethe's theater, he saw a "serious comedy" performed "perfectly to his satisfaction," while the duke, Goethe's duke, sat in his little open side box, without an attendant, and in plain clothes.

A curious renconter he had in the streets of Weimar. Passing along, he saw a little girl three years old, making a stand, and refusing to move. Two ladies were trying in vain to prevail on her to go on. The gallant American crossed over to try his powers of persuasion, which were potent with children. One of the ladies, he perceived, was a countess he had met at court, and bowed to her. The other lady he did not recognize at all, nor in any way salute. Soon after, he met the Baroness De Stein, and told her that he had just seen one of the little princesses with the Countess De Peyster and a "*jolie fille de chambre*." It happened that the "jolie fille de chambre" was no less a personage than the Grand Duchess of Weimar, to whom Madame De Stein told the story. Colonel Burr, on meeting the duchess at dinner that evening, at the palace, was humorously rallied by her on his oversight. It is evident that Burr was in remarkably high favor in the courtly circles of Weimar.

But why was he there? It was not the fame of Goethe and Wieland, and the duke, that attracted Aaron Burr to Weimar; but an amour, a *serious* passion for a lady of rank. "Weimar, Weimar," he wrote, "for which I have gone seventy miles out of my way; have expended so much time and money; and all this for the lovely D'Or. I shall, at least, have the satisfaction of having performed my engagement, perhaps the only reward." Then, as the recent intelligence from Paris crosses his mind, he adds, "How little did I know how much I should regret the time!" The lady was a member of the court circle of Weimar. He was with her constantly there, and appears to have been no unwelcome cava-

lier. His passion grew as the days passed on, till he became so completely captivated, as to be tempted to abandon his long-cherished projects, and devote himself for ever to the object of his idolatry.

He saw his danger, and sought safety in a precipitate flight. He was engaged to dinners, to parties, to balls; but, without waiting even to send excuses or farewells, or to receive letters that had been promised him, he hurried away from the sphere of the "sorceress." "Another interview," wrote he to his daughter, "and I might have been lost; my hopes and projects blasted and abandoned. The horror of this last catastrophe struck me so forcibly, and the danger was so imminent, that at eight o'clock I ordered post-horses; gave a crown extra to the postillion to drive like the devil, and lo! here I am in a warm room, near a neat, good bed, safely locked within the walls of Erfurth, rejoicing and repining. If you had been near me, I should have had none of this trouble."

As he was writing the above sentences, an incident occurred which showed that the struggle through which he had passed had left him in no very amiable temper. "About one o'clock in the morning," he says, "an ill-looking fellow opened my door without knocking, and, muttering in German something which I did not comprehend, bid me put out my candle. Being in no very placid humor at the moment, as you see, I cursed him, and sent him to the lower regions, in French and English. He advanced, and was going to seize the candle. My umbrella, which has a dirk in the handle, being near me, I seized it, drew the dirk, and drove him out of the room. Some minutes after I heard the steps of a number of men, and, looking out of my window, saw it was a corporal's guard. It then occurred to me that this Erfurth, being a garrison town, with a French governor, there might, probably enough, be an order for extinguishing lights at a certain hour, and I had no doubt but the gentlemen I had just seen in the street were coming to invite me to take a walk with them. So I bundled up my papers, and put them in my pocket to be ready for a lodging in the guard-house. It was only the relief of the

sentinels going round; and who the impertinent extinguisher was I have not heard."

We find him next at Gotha, where he remained three or four days, and made an extraordinary impression upon the reigning family. The duke, in particular, himself a brilliant man, was charmed with the urbane and agreeable American. Burr almost lived at the palace. He spoke one evening of Theodosia, and chanced to mention that he had a portrait of her at his hotel. Nothing would content the duke but an immediate sight of the picture, and an usher was dispatched to bring it to the palace. The duke liked Theodosia, but not the portrait. "In the original," said he, "there must be dignity, majesty, genius, gentleness, and sensibility; all discernible in the picture, but imperfectly expressed." Burr, on his part, was charmed with the duke's daughter, the princess Louise, a lovely girl of ten years. Before leaving Gotha, he demanded a souvenir of the little princess. "What should it be?" she asked. He proposed a *garter*, which greatly amused the group. But she sent him a drawing of a bouquet, "executed wonderfully for her years." On examining it, he found no name or inscription to "verify the important transaction," and sent it back to have the omission supplied, which was very gracefully done by the little princess.*

* The following is the note in which Colonel Burr made the request:

"TO MADEMOISELLE LA BARONNE DE DALWIGK.

"I beg pardon, in the first place, for writing to you at all. In the next, for writing in English; but great exigencies defy the restraint of forms.

"I have received, with enthusiasm and delight, the elegant bouquet made by the beautiful hand of my lovely Princess Louisa; but I have searched in vain for a name, a date, an address, an inscription, something to denote the donor and the occasion. Alas! all is blank and silent. Allow me to intreat your influence with my adored princess to induce her to add her name and a date. The bouquet is sent for the purpose by the bearer of this, who will wait your orders.

"On another subject, interesting to yourself, be assured of my punctuality and zeal. It is with regret that I bid adieu to Gotha. I shall bear with me to my native forests the recollection of the charms and hospitalities of its court.

"A. BURR."

At Gotha, as everywhere else in Germany, he found people familiarly acquainted with his career; "duels, treasons, speeches, gallantries," to use his own language. The Baron Strick, for example, chamberlain to the King of Prussia, whom Burr met at the court of Gotha, had read his farewell speech to the Senate, and conceived for the speaker an admiration approaching the enthusiastic. No American, in a word, has had such success at the refined courts of Germany as Colonel Burr.

He remained a few days at Frankfort-on-the-Main, before entering the dominions of the emperor. Well supplied with introductions from his friends in Gotha and Weimar, he was at once at home in the court society of the city. At the Casino there occurred two or three ridiculous incidents.

"Who is that beautiful creature with the blanche bon?" asked Burr of a grand duke whom he knew.

"That, sir, is my daughter; shall I have the honor to present you?"

A few minutes after, his attention was attracted by another lady.

"Pray, count," said he to an acquaintance, "what fine, voluptuous woman was that you were just now talking with?"

"Who, the very tall one, with the bon rouge?"

"Exactly; a most striking figure."

"That, sir, is my wife. Ha! ha! Come here, my dear, Monsieur le Colonel Burr wishes to know you."

This, said he, was too much for one evening; and having two other engagements, he soon left. Returning later, he found the ladies promenading the floor, while the gentlemen were seated at cards. This struck him as being an odd arrangement of the company, and addressing a young lady, he said, "Is there any law forbidding a gentleman to walk with a lady?"

"O! nonsense; how could there be such a law?"

"Well, then, is it contrary to good manners?"

"By no means."

"May I then walk with you?"

"Certainly."

And so he did for an hour, though no gentleman dared follow his example.

From Frankfort he went to Mayence, where his Paris passports were to be sent. To his dismay, he found they had not arrived. He learned further, that his intention to visit Paris had been extremely ill-received by the American minister, and he was earnestly advised not to put his person into the power of the French authorities. He was not dissuaded, but began anew negotiations for the indispensable passports. Fearing a long delay, he withdrew from society, and went to reside in cheap lodgings, observing that ducats were of more value to him just then than dinners. To his inexpressible relief, however, the passports soon arrived, and on the 16th of February, 1810, he was in Paris.

CHAPTER XXX.

IN PARIS UNDER SURVEILLANCE.

Interview with the Duc de Cadore — Fruitless Attempts to Reach the Emperor — Letter to Fouche — The King of Westphalia — Passports Refused — Under Surveillance of the Police — Pecuniary Straits — Cut by the American Residents — Interview with the Duc de Rovigo — Correspondence with the American Charge des Affaires — Burr's Extreme Poverty — Cures a Smoky Chimney — Letters from Theodosia — Expedients for Raising Money.

Until Colonel Burr heard from Professor Heeren that Napoleon had consented to the independence of the Spanish provinces in America, he had no intention of attempting to reach the ear of the emperor. The news of that event changed him once more from a traveler into a politician, and though he could not break away immediately from the fascinations of German society, yet having once done so, he pursued his object with all his own intensity. It was his last hope.

The morning after his arrival in Paris he began operations by dispatching a note to the Duc de Cadore, Napoleon's minister for foreign affairs, hinting at his object in coming to Paris, and asking an interview. In the evening came a civil reply, appointing a day and hour for the purpose. At the appointed time, Colonel Burr went to the office of the minister, and applied for admission. But the porter, on referring to the list of persons to be that day received, found not the name of Burr, and refused to admit him. This was not a promising sign. The applicant, too, had neglected to bring the duc's note granting the audience. "*Fortunately*," says the diary, "the porter of the day was a woman," and "after much negotiation, got admission to the ante-chamber." He sent in his card and was received; had half an hour's conversation with the duc, in the course of which he gave him an outline of his

views and plans. How incapable the ministers of Napoleon were of independent action, how literally they were the *ministers* of their master's will, is known. The Duc de Cadore, on this occasion, could only listen politely to the statements of the applicant, and give an *official* promise to submit his projects to the consideration of the emperor. Colonel Burr was not elated by this interview, and, indeed, it had no result whatever.

He waited a few days, and then applied to other ministers, but received no answer. To less important officials he procured admittance, but met with no encouragement. He found, what so many adventurers had to discover during Napoleon's reign, that every avenue from the outer world to the emperor's cabinet, was beset with difficulties. The King of Westphalia, who had been superbly entertained at Richmond Hill in other days, was then in Paris, and Colonel Burr danced attendance in the ante-chambers of his hotel, in the hope of obtaining an audience. He wrote a memorial to the emperor himself, and gave it in charge to an official of the court to present. No response. On the ministers' "public days," he occasionally got the ear of one of them for a few minutes, and made, in some instances, a favorable impression; but nothing followed to give him hope.

Five weeks passed in these fruitless endeavors. He then addressed to the Duc d'Otrante (Fouché) the following letter:

"Mr. Burr, from the United States of North America, having some months ago seen published in the *Moniteur* the expression of his majesty's assent to the independence of the Spanish American colonies, came to Paris to offer his services to accomplish that object and others connected therewith. He asked neither men or money. He asked only the author ization of his majesty.

"Mr. Burr has had conversations with persons near the government, and through whom he had presumed that the communications would have passed to the emperor. Having received no answer, he proposes shortly to take his departure. But being persuaded that his communications have not been understood, and doubting whether they have at all been pre-

sented to his majesty, Mr. Burr should, with very great regret, leave the country without having had a few minutes' conversation with his excellency the Duke d'Otrante, for whose talents he has long entertained the highest veneration, and by whom Mr. Burr is convinced that the value of his views would be promptly and justly appreciated.

"He takes the liberty of asking an audience at any hour his excellency may be pleased to name, and begs leave to offer assurances of his profound consideration and respect."

The interview was granted. But the Duc d'Otrante could do no more for him than the Duc de Cadore.

The King of Westphalia being still in Paris, it occurred to Colonel Burr, that through him he could gain access to the emperor. After attempting again to procure an interview through the officers of his court, he wrote directly to the king himself: "Sire—I take the liberty of asking an interview with your majesty, as well to offer personally my homage as to make a communication, of the value of which your majesty will determine in a few minutes' conversation." He received for answer the information that the king was about to leave Paris for twenty days, and that nothing could be done until his return. It does not appear that the audience was ever granted.

It were useless to narrate all the efforts made by Colonel Burr to obtain consideration for his projects at the French court. He had small expectation of success after the first eight days of his stay in Paris; but it was not till he had spent five months of active exertion, without receiving from any source the slightest encouragement, that he finally abandoned all hope of accomplishing the object for which he had come to Europe. How indefatigably he attended the audience-chambers of ministers! What letters and memorials he wrote! How perfectly he maintained his dignity, in circumstances that made him a constant solicitor! If his task had been to gain over the ministers of Napoleon, his success would have been easy and speedy; and if he could have stood face to face with Napoleon for half an hour, he could not have failed to make an impression on a man who had a keen eye for discerning

executive force, and knew how to render it available for his own purposes. If the boy-soldier, Aaron Burr, had begun his career in the French service, and had stood as near to Napoleon as he did to Washington, the Great Soldier would have seen in the intrepid, impetuous lieutenant, the stuff to make a marshal of. Burr missed immortal glory by being born on the wrong continent.

The disappointed adventurer now determined, at all hazards, to return to the United States, and applied for the requisite passports. *They were refused!* No explanation was given him, except that he could go to any part of France he wished, but that his departure from the empire was positively forbidden. He was under the surveillance of that perfect police which could make the empire as impassable a prison as a walled and moated fortress. "Behold me," he cried, "a prisoner of state, and almost without a sous." Henceforward, for many a tedious month, his only serious occupation was to get out of France. "All this vexation," he thought, "arose from the machinations of our worthy minister, General Armstrong,* who has been, and still is, indefatigable in his exertions to my prejudice; goaded on by personal hatred, by political rancor, and by the natural malevolence of his temper."

His first care now was to provide the means of subsistence. He had intended to remain a month in Paris, and had come provided with money for that period. At first he had lived, as was necessary, in a tolerable hotel, and, for the sake of appearances, had kept a valet. Half a year of this mode of life, though he economized to the point of going without sugar (then a dollar a pound in Paris), had reduced his finances to the lowest ebb, and his situation was really serious. Winter was approaching, and there was no prospect either of his leaving the empire, or of being able to live in it. He was by no means friendless, however. The celebrated Count Volney he had known and entertained in America, and was

* Armstrong was an old New York politician, connected by marriage with the Livingstons, and now devoted to Jefferson. It was Armstrong, doubtless, that influenced Talleyrand (another of Burr's New York guests) against the exile.

now his frequent associate in Paris. With Mrs. Robertson, the widow of the Scotch historian, he was extremely intimate. He soon had a large circle of admiring friends in the upper ranks of the Bureaucracy, and was evidently regarded with a favorable eye by two or three of the Napoleonic dukes. But in his extreme need, it was to a countryman that he made known his circumstances, and applied for help.

Even at that early period, there was a considerable number of American residents in Paris, a city which was peculiarly dear to the men who could remember the Revolution as a recent event. Upon the arrival of Aaron Burr, the American residents entered into a combination against him. It was agreed that any American citizen who should converse with, speak to, or salute him, should be "cut" by all the rest; and that no captain of a vessel, or merchant, should convey any letter or parcel for him. The messenger to whom were entrusted dispatches from the American minister to the government at Washington, was instructed to take no letter or parcel from Aaron Burr, and to require every one handing him a letter or parcel, for delivery in the United States, to pledge his honor that it contained nothing from Aaron Burr.

In spite of these vindictive measures, he had friends and partisans among the Americans in Paris, one of whom was Edward Griswold, formerly a member of the New York bar, and now a speculating resident of Paris, and a man of fortune. To him, as the last louis was gliding from his purse, Colonel Burr frankly and fully revealed his situation, and asked a loan of a hundred and fifty guineas. The man of wealth was himself temporarily embarrassed, but contrived to advance about half that sum, which enabled Burr to exist during the winter.

But only to exist. He lived in the cheapest lodgings, and denied himself nearly every luxury. Frequent in his diary are such entries as this: "It is now so cold that I should be glad of a fire; but to that I have great objections; for what would become of the fifty plays, and something, I won't tell what, which I meditate to buy for Gampillo, that will make his little heart beat." Or this: "I never spend a livre that I do not calculate what pretty thing it might have bought for

you (Theodosia) and Gampillo." Or this: "I was near going to bed without writing to you, for it is very cold, and I have only two little stumps (of wood) about as big as your little fists. But then I thought you would so pout; so I mustered courage, and have wrote you all this, hussy." Or this: "I wear no surtout, for a great many philosophic reasons; principally, because I have not got one. The old great coat which I brought from America, still serves for traveling, if I should ever travel again." While he was thus shivering in his garret, one day, he read in an American paper that Aaron Burr had entered the service of the Emperor Napoleon, at a salary of two thousand pounds per annum; and, in an English paper that the same individual was engaged in a project for dismembering the United States!

It was not without many an effort that he yielded to the necessity of remaining in Paris. When, through the aid of Mr. Griswold, he had once more the means of returning to the United States, his exertions to obtain a passport were incessant. He wrote to ministers, inquiring the reason of his detention, and, receiving no answer, besieged their antechambers for interviews. One of his interviews with the Duc de Rovigo (Savary) is described at some length in the diary:

"At one to Duke Rovigo's. I was the first, and placed in the ante-chamber. The huissier told me that the audience would not begin till two. 'Why, then, sir, did you bid me come at one?' 'That you might be ready at two.' There came in to the number of forty-seven; a majority women. Two English women sat next to me. At half-past two the doors were thrown open, and a huissier cried out, 'Mesdames et messieurs, entrez.' I was quite surprised, expecting we were to be called in one by one, as I had seen practiced by Fauchet and Champigny. We all went in. The duke, in full dress, was at the further end of the room, and we stood, forming a sort of horse-shoe, of which the two ends approached him. He began on his right, and so on, hearing and answering, generally, in about one minute. Some of the women kept him three or four minutes, and some talking on after he had given his answer, till he had turned his back and ad-

dressed the next. His first question was, 'Qui etes vous?' One very ill-looking fellow he asked, 'Etes vous le Colonel Burr?' By which I learned that he had that person in his mind. I shifted my place so as to be last; but some three or four others, with the like design, got after me.

"At length my turn came. I announced myself, and told him I had been refused a passport, at which I was the more surprised, as he probably knew the nature of the business which had brought me to France.

"'I have heard it mentioned, but I do not know the details.'

"'I am delighted, sir, to have an opportunity to make you acquainted with them. I have not had an opportunity of being heard by a soldier, and no other is capable of judging of my enterprise. The military genius of your excellency will appreciate my views. I should be sorry, indeed, to leave France without having been listened to and understood.'

"He asked me to walk aside that he might hear it. I told him that I had it in writing.

"'Ah! give it me. I will read it with eagerness.'

"So I drew it from my side pocket and gave it to him, and was going to renew the question of passport.

"'Ah! we will talk of that after I shall have read your memorial. I will write and give you a private audience in a few days.' And then he suddenly turned off to another.

"So that, after all my pains to get an audience, it has amounted to just nothing. It was unlucky, however, that, through ignorance, I should have stumbled on his public day. On any other he gives private audience to all who are permitted to come in. I like much his appearance and manner. A handsome man, about forty-two, very prompt and decided, but sufficiently courteous. He has the appearance of intelligence and good breeding; all which is better than I had been taught to expect."

A few days after, he attended a grand reception at the palace of the Duc Rovigo, where he was presented in form by the Duc d'Alberg. The Duc de Rovigo had read the memorial, and "said some civil things," but no allusion was made

to the passport. Soon Burr was again in the official antechamber, and, though told by the usher that the duc did not receive that day, he waited three hours, and "got sight of his excellency by force and demanded the passport." The duc escaped his importunity, by asserting that the emperor had consented to his departure, and that he could obtain a passport by applying to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. But Burr knew the French government too well to believe him. "Words," said he, "cost nothing here, and there is often an immensity of time and space between the promise of a courtier and the performance." And there was in this instance. The duc's assurance was literally nothing but a means of escaping from an importunate suitor.

He addressed a memorial at last to the emperor himself, in which he told the story of his repeated failures to gain a hearing for his projects, and of his forced detention in Paris. "Not only," he concluded, "did the motives of my visit and my conduct since my residence in France deserve a different return; at all times I have deserved well of your majesty and of the French nation. My home in the United States has been always open to French citizens, and few of any note who have visited the United States have not experienced my hospitality. At a period when the administration of the government of the United States was hostile to France and Frenchmen, they received from me efficient protection. These, sire, are my crimes against France! Presuming that a proceeding so distressing and unmerited — so contrary to the laws of hospitality, to the fame of your majesty's magnanimity and justice, and to that of the courtesy of the French nation, must be without your majesty's knowledge, and that, amid the mighty concerns which weigh on your majesty's mind, those of an individual so humble as myself may have escaped your notice, I venture to intrude into your presence, and to ask either a passport to return to the United States, or, if in fact your majesty, with the expectation of rendering me useful to you, should wish a further delay, that I may be informed of the period of that delay, that I may take measures accordingly for my subsistence."

No answer was vouchsafed to this memorial, which may never have reached the emperor.

Before the winter set in, Colonel Burr brought himself to apply to the American minister for a certificate of citizenship, the possession of which, he erroneously supposed, would secure the consent of the French government to his departure. General Armstrong was absent, and had left in charge of the embassy Jonathan Russell, of Rhode Island. To him Colonel Burr formally applied. Russell replied, that "the province of granting passports to citizens of the United States belongs to the consul, to whom all wishing for that protection must apply." Colonel Burr applied to the consul;* who answered, that "his knowledge of the circumstances under which Mr. Burr left the United States rendered it his duty to decline giving Mr. Burr either a passport or a permis de séjour," but that "the chargé des affaires unquestionably possessed full authority to grant protection in either of those forms to any person to whom it might be improperly denied by the consul." Colonel Burr accordingly applied again to the chargé des affaires, transmitting the consul's note, and denying the right of a foreign minister to inquire into any "*circumstances*" other than those which tend to prove or disprove the claim to citizenship. But, continued Burr, "if Mr. Russell should be of a different opinion, Mr. Burr is ready to satisfy him that no circumstances exist which can, by any construction, in the slightest degree impair his rights as a citizen, and that the conclusions of the consul are founded in error, either in points of fact or of inference. Yet, conceiving that every citizen has a right to demand a certificate or passport, Mr. Burr is constrained to renew his application to Mr. Russell, to whom the consul has been pleased to refer the decision."

To this, Russell replied in the following words: "The man who evades the offended laws of his country, abandons, for the time, the right to their protection. This fugitive from justice, during his voluntary exile, has a claim to no other passport than one which shall enable him to surrender himself

* The consul was Mr. McRae, a lawyer of Richmond, who had figured at the trial as one of the counsel for the prosecution.

for trial for the offenses with which he stands charged. Such a passport Mr. Russell will furnish to Mr. Burr, but no other."

The correspondence here rested for some months, but Burr at length replied to Russell's letter with equal adroitness and effrontery. To complete this story, his retort may be inserted here: "Mr. Burr asks of the chargé des affaires a passport to return to the United States. To prevent a circuitous proceeding, Mr. Burr takes the liberty of recalling to Mr. Russell's recollection that the consul has declined to act in regard to Mr. Burr; that the question has been referred to Mr. Russell, *who has been pleased to decide that Mr. Burr is entitled to the passport above requested.* He now wishes to avail himself of this decision." The chargé could not refuse the passport. But that document was of no avail without the added sanction of the French government, which had still to be obtained.

We shall pass rapidly over the period of Colonel Burr's forced residence in Paris. It was fifteen months before he finally escaped from the country; during the greater part of which his attention was divided between efforts to obtain passports, and schemes to procure the means of living. He was all activity. His mind never stagnated. His spirits never sank. He read enormously; he visited numberless persons and places; and was on the alert at all times.

His extreme poverty he regarded always in the light of a joke. "How sedate and sage one is," he says, "with only three sous." And again: "I may as well tell you of my economy in this wine affair. Eating my bread and cheese, and seeing half a bottle of the twenty-five sous wine left, I thought it would be too extravagant to open a bottle of the good; so I tried my best to get down the bad, constantly thinking of the other, which was in sight, and trying to persuade myself to give Gamp. some of that; but no. I stuck to the bad, and got it all down. Then, to pay myself for this act of heroism, treated him to a large tumbler of the true Roussillon, and sallied forth to my marchand de vin to engage him to exchange the residue. You see I am of Santara's

opinion, that though a man may be a little the poorer for drinking good wine, yet he is, under its influence, much more able to bear poverty."

A stout-hearted, jovial boy, who had been captivated by Robinson Crusoe, and then cast away on an island, would, we may imagine, repeat with avidity the contrivances he had read of in his favorite book, and take all the hardships of his lot in the gay Crusoean spirit. Something in this way, Colonel Burr took his poverty. He played with it. He had a kind of pleasure in spending his very *last* sous, to see what would come of it. "Having left exactly sixteen sous," he tells his daughter, "I bought with them two plays for my present amusement, and then for yours. Came home with my two plays, and not a single sous. Have been ransacking everywhere to see if no little ten sous piece could be found. Not one. To make matters worse, I am out of cigars, but have a little black, vile tobacco, which serves me as substitute. Poor Julia (landlady) too, is exhausted, being in advance for me twenty or thirty francs." He speaks frequently of his maneuvers to avoid the cold. Once, the wind blew down his chimney with such force as to scatter the ashes all over the room. "After various experiments how to weather the gale, I at length discovered that I could exist by lying flat on the floor; for this purpose I laid a blanket; and reposing on my elbows, with a candle at my side, on the floor, have been reading L'Espion Anglois, translated from the English; extremely well written, and, thus prostrate, I have the honor to write you this. When I got up just now for pen and ink, I found myself almost buried in ashes and cinders. You would have thought I had laid a month at the foot of Mount Vesuvius."

His chimney, indeed, was a ceaseless source of annoyance. Paris chimneys were so generally bad, that it was one of the trades of the city to cure them of smoking. His smoky chimney, however, enabled him to make a signal display of ingenuity, and to give Parisians one of the first proofs ever afforded them of the value of a Yankee notion. He engaged a "fumisté" to work, under his own order, upon his insupportable chimney. Burr directed the laying of every brick; and the

astonished mason, as he put each one in its place, paused to remonstrate against the absurdity of the plan. He was certain it could not answer; he would not be responsible. "Monsieur, it is my affair!" was Burr's reply. The work was soon done, a fire was lighted, and all the inmates of the house watched the result with interest. It answered perfectly. "The fumisté gazed upon the fire with astonishment and admiration, and seemed to conceive for me a most profound respect."

But this was merely a private and domestic triumph. A few days after, he performed the same feat upon a larger scale. He tells the story in his hurried, graphic way: "To Madame Fenwick's in the character of *fumisté*. Every chimney in her house smokes sometimes, and most of them always. I was railing against the stupidity of the Parisians, and quoted this among other instances. She challenged me to cure the evil. Accepted; and she assigned for the trial of my American skill the worst in the house. It had been already in the hands of several scientific fumistés. Some applied their remedies at the top, and others at the bottom, but equally without effect. This morning was assigned for my experiment, and she gave me carte blanche. At half past eight I found the mason, the brick, and the mortar. We went to work. She, in the mean time, made me breakfast (coffee, blanc, and honey) in the adjoining room. She amusing herself at my folly. Several visitors called, and all came to see what was going forward. Satirical, but pleasant remarks were made. On my part there was no sort of reply. At length the work was finished. At eleven we made a large fire. The chimney drew to perfection. The doors and windows might be open or shut; nothing disturbed the draught. What added greatly to the merit of the result is, that the day was the most unfavorable. A vehement wind from a quarter that always had filled the house with smoke. 'Sir, if you will announce yourself as a fumisté you will make a fortune.'"

In this instance, as in the other, he built the fire-place on the principle with which Franklin had, twenty years before, made Americans familiar. Thenceforward, he boiled his potatoes

without blinding himself with smoke; and potatoes were his main-stay sometimes for weeks together.

The bitter ingredient in the exile's cup during his residence in Paris, was the interruption of correspondence with his daughter. Nearly a year passed without his receiving a letter from her. One packet of letters reached him twenty-three months after it had been sent. She, too, had to pass eleven anxious months without hearing from her father. Yet father, daughter, and "Gampillus" wrote by every ship that sailed. The times were troubled, navigation was as nearly as possible suspended, and the route between the interior of South Carolina and an obscure lodging in Paris, was very long and circuitous. Moreover, the arrival of a letter addressed to a person under surveillance, and its delivery into the hands of that unfortunate individual, were, and are, two very distinct events in Paris, the latter by no means necessarily following the former.

When, after long, long intervals, words from the hills of South Carolina did find their way to the exile's ear, they were not words of good cheer. The embargo and non-intercourse acts had paralyzed the industry of the United States. Theodosia said the country was in a dreadful state. Produce could scarcely be sold for any price, while clothing and groceries were dearer than ever. Her husband had "offered the two lower plantations for sale, but every body was trying to sell, and no one could buy. *Even Mari*" (her husband), she added, "condemns the present measures of government, and joins in the almost universal cry of free commerce or war." She was puzzled at her father's protracted stay in Paris. "I begin to think," she said, "that *Hannibal has got to Capua.*"

She had to tell him, too, of old friends, who, when she was last in New York, were doubtful whether it was "safe" to visit her; of men who wished her father well, but were afraid to speak of him where speaking would do him good; of one who owed, and had promised pecuniary supplies, and "published himself a villain." But, exclaims this incomparable daughter, "JOHN SWARTWOUT is true invariably, and nobly conspicuous as the sun. He retrieves the character of man."

Keenly Theodosia watched for indications that the nation was relenting toward her father. But such indications never appeared. The newspapers seldom mentioned his name, but to stigmatize it. Editors friendly to him, knew that to write in his defense would only be to share his odium, and politicians were equally aware that no supporter of Aaron Burr could hope to receive the smallest governmental favor. There is no country, perhaps, where it requires so much moral courage to defend an unpopular man, or opinion, as the United States. Among the letters of Theodosia, there is one to Albert Gallatin, asking whether, in case of her father's return to America, he thought the government would prosecute him again. The language of that letter is remarkable. It shows that in soliciting the opinion of a public man on the point proposed, she felt herself to be asking a prodigious favor. "Though convinced of your *firmness*," she says, "still with the utmost diffidence I venture to address you on a subject which it is almost *dangerous to mention*." And having made the request, she is still eloquent in apologizing for the vastness of the demand upon his courage, his candor, his liberality. "Recollect," she says, "what are my incitements. Recollect that I have seen my father dashed from the high rank he held in the minds of his countrymen, imprisoned, and forced into exile. Must he ever remain excommunicated from the participation of domestic enjoyments and the privileges of a citizen; aloof from his accustomed sphere, and singled out as a mark for the shafts of calumny? Why should he be thus proscribed and held up to execration? What benefit to the country can possibly accrue from the continuation of this system? Surely it must be evident to the worst enemies of my father, that no man, situated as he will be, could obtain any undue influence, if even he should desire it."

Mr. Gallatin's answer was not decisive, and she was not without fear that prosecution awaited her father if he should return. She told him, three months after the date of her letter to Gallatin, that she augured ill of government, because the newspapers most devoted to it endeavored to keep up feelings of irritation against him. Yet she thought the "ma-

jority of the citizens were not inimical," and she urged him vehemently to return. She advised him not to land in Charleston, but to go boldly, and at once to New York, where, if he was attacked, he would be "in the midst of the tenth legion." If he should go first to South Carolina, "which both their *hearts* would crave, the news of his arrival would reach New York long before him, and the fervency of surprise and delighted friendship would have time to cool;" cabals would be formed, and measures would be taken. She thought it better for his affairs to come to a crisis, than for him to live in constant view of threatened ruin. "*If the worst comes*," she added, "*I will leave every thing to suffer with you!*" She little thought that her spirited advice would find Hannibal a prisoner at Capua.

Theodosia devoted a part of the letter just quoted to Blennerhassett. She said that that individual had written to Mr. Alston, accusing him and Aaron Burr of "plans that never entered the heads of either," and threatening immediate exposure unless Mr. Alston would purchase his silence by the payment of thirty-five thousand dollars. Blennerhassett said he had the pamphlet already written, and its revelations would blast the character of Governor Alston for ever. "As to Mr. Burr," remarked the Irish gentleman, "I wish you to observe, that I long since ceased to consider reference to his honor, resources, or good faith, in any other light than as a scandal to any man offering it who is not sunk as low as himself." "To Mr. Alston, also," said Theodosia, "he used such language as a low-bred coward *may* use at a distance of many hundred miles." She added that her husband had not deigned to notice the "audacious swindling trick."

Colonel Burr made many endeavors in Paris to improve his finances. At one time we see him absorbed in a speculation, in the shares of the Holland Company, in which he embarked all his slender capital. For many days he was on the rack of anxiety, but he eventually gained a few hundred dollars by the venture. If he could have obtained a passport to Amsterdam, he thought he could have cleared ten thousand dollars in a few weeks, by a more extensive operation of the same

kind. His spirits rose at the prospect. "I will send you," he said, to Theodosia, "a million of francs within six months," and then with merry exultation, adds, "but one half of it must be laid out in pretty things. O! what beautiful things I will send you. Gampillus, too, must have a beautiful little watch, and at least fifty trumpets of different sorts and sizes. Home at ten, and have been casting up my millions and spending it. Lord, how many people I have made happy!"

Dreams all. He tried in vain to get the passport. He then intrusted the scheme to a friend, who was to act for him in Holland, and share the proceeds of the speculation. That friend betrayed him, and nothing that occurred to Colonel Burr during all the years of his exile touched him so nearly as that. "My dear Theodosia," he wrote on the day of the discovery, "I am sick at heart, having made the most afflicting of all discoveries, the perfidy of a friend. A few days ago, a slight suspicion rested in my mind, but I rejected it as unworthy of him and unworthy of me. It is confirmed with every circumstance of aggravation. I had confided to him my speculation with unqualified frankness; disclosed every circumstance — things known to me alone. I had built on it the hopes of fortune. He pledged solemnly his honor to speak of it to no one without my leave. Not to take a step but in concurrence with me, on terms we had agreed. He went, I believe the same day, disclosed the whole, and associated himself with another to take it wholly from me. The object is irrevocably lost; for, even if he should repent, he can not take back his communications. This man first sought me under very peculiar circumstances; such as denoted generosity of sentiment, sensibility, and independence of mind." This is more like a burst of emotion than any other passage in the diary.

Once, in Paris, he had serious thoughts of translating a book from English into French for a bookseller. The work was in two volumes, octavo, for the translation of which he was to receive one hundred louis; he thought he could do it in *three months*, which, he said, was better than starving. The most singular circumstance of this scheme was, that the work

contained, to use his own words, "a quantity of abuse and libel on A. Burr." The work was probably "Lambert's Travels in North America," upon reading which, Burr had made the following entry in his journal: "To give the character of A. Burr, he copies part of Wirt's speech on the trial at Richmond." It is needless to say the project of translating was not carried into execution. But he was the man to have translated all the "abuse and libels" with literal fidelity, and without adding a note of denial or qualification.

At other times, we see him hurrying about Paris investigating a new mode of extracting vinegar from wood, or going to see a new plan of raising water, which he said he should use in supplying Charleston with that element, or inspecting the process of making and inserting artificial teeth, or trying experiments in the roasting of coffee, or rushing from official to official for tickets of admission to galleries and reviews.

He gave Theodosia a ludicrous account of the delights of walking in the streets of Paris at that time. "No sidewalks. The carts, cabrioles, and carriages of all sorts run up to the very houses. You must save yourself by bracing flat against the wall, there being, in most places, stones set up against the houses to keep the carts from injuring them. Most of the streets are paved as Albany and New York were before the Revolution, with an open gutter in the middle. Some arched in the middle, and a little gutter each side, very near the houses. It is fine sport for the cabriole and hack drivers to run a wheel in one of these gutters, always full of filth, and bespatter fifty pedestrians who are braced against the wall. The gutters or conduits for the water from the eves of the houses are carried out a few feet from the roofs, and thus discharge the rain-water over your head. In most places there are no such pipes, and then you have the benefit of the water from the eaves. This was a great ridicule against the city of Albany about twenty years ago; but Albany has reformed the evil."

The last few months of his stay in Paris he was put to all those shifts for eking out the means of subsistence which gentlemen in difficulties are wont to employ. He borrowed when he could, and pawned when he could not. Into Gampillus's

collection of coins, he made sad inroads. Sometimes he sold a parcel of books. Often he was penniless, and in debt to every body.

But all things have an end. Colonel Burr, at length, made his escape from Paris. A detail of the events which led to his deliverance will give the reader a momentary glimpse of the state of things in France under Napoleon the First.

CHAPTER XXXI.

HE ESCAPES.

THE TICKET ADVENTURE — ACQUAINTANCE WITH M. DENON AND THE DUC DE BASSANO — A BRIGHTER PROSPECT — PASSPORTS PROCURED — BASSANO'S GENEROSITY — JOURNEY TO HOLLAND — FURTHER DELAYS — LEAVES PARIS FOR EVER — INCIDENTS OF HIS DEPARTURE — SAILS FROM HOLLAND — CAPTURED BY A BRITISH FRIGATE — IN LONDON AGAIN — PENNILESS — CHEERFULNESS IN MISFORTUNE — DESPERATE EFFORTS TO RAISE MONEY — LEAVES LONDON — CHASE AFTER THE SHIP — SAILS FOR BOSTON.

THE Baron Denon, who accompanied Bonaparte to Egypt, and wrote the celebrated book upon that expedition, was Director of the Fine Arts during the reign of Napoleon. He enjoyed, but never *used* the confidence of the emperor; as Napoleon himself testified at St. Helena. With the ministers of the emperor he had influence, particularly with the Duc de Bassano (Maret), the Minister for Foreign Relations, who also began his career as a literary man. When Colonel Burr was in Paris, Baron Denon's house was a resort for the rank, learning, and celebrity of the French metropolis.

It was an act of gallantry that led Burr to an acquaintance with this gentleman. A certain Madame St. Claire, whom Burr extremely wished to gratify, asked him to procure for her a ticket of admission to the Louvre. Among Burr's intimate friends in Paris was the Duchess d'Alberg, wife of the Grand Duke of Frankfort, to whom he had brought letters from the Grand Duke of Gotha. From the duchess Colonel Burr readily enough obtained the promise of the desired ticket; but on going to receive it, found that she had neglected to procure one. The duke then gave him a note to the Director of the Fine Arts, the source of tickets to all the imperial galleries. M. Denon received him graciously, and on be-

ing complimented by Burr upon his book, became more gracious, and gave him a ticket for two persons.

Burr was rushing eagerly away to Madame St. Claire, "sure of a very kind reception," when he met Mr. Griswold, who said to him: "Sir, I am in the most distressing dilemma. A lady, whom I wish very much to oblige, asked me to procure her a ticket for the Louvre, and I promised to do it, but have been totally disappointed, and dare not see the lady's face; can you put me in the way to extricate myself?"

"*Voila!*" exclaimed Burr, producing the ticket, and giving it to Griswold, who went on his way rejoicing, not suspecting that he had only bestowed the "most distressing dilemma" upon his friend. That day Burr did not venture into the presence of the defrauded St. Claire; and when he saw her on the day following, she was in a humor which nothing but a ticket to the Louvre could appease. Away went Burr again to the Baron Denon for another ticket; and this was the most fortunate of all his many visits to persons of note in Paris. His fortunes were at the lowest ebb. He had not one sous in the world. The day before, he had had to make a considerable detour to avoid passing a place where sat a woman to whom he owed two sous for a cigar.

He found a dozen persons in M. Denon's hall of audience, and the great man had not yet appeared. "I doubted," says Colonel Burr, "whether he would recollect my name or person. On entering, he passed by the rest, sought me out, took me by the hand, and led me into his cabinet, and asked me to excuse him a few minutes till he should dismiss the persons in waiting. Gamp was justly surprised at a reception so unusual. On his return, he took my hand again with both his, assured me of the pleasure he had in meeting me, and his desire to be useful unto me. I took him at his word; told him the business which had brought me to France; the memoir I had presented, and the ill success; that is, the silence; and that my wishes were now confined to a passport. He offered to speak of my memoir to M. Maret (le Duc de Bassano), supposed to be the most intimate counselor of the emperor, and begged me to permit him to peruse my memoir. Agreed·

to-morrow morning, at ten, appointed for the purpose. Got my ticket and came off in triumph, that I could now fulfill my engagement to St. Claire."

These professions of regard were sincere, those promises were performed, and M. Denon continued his good offices till they had accomplished Colonel Burr's release.

A few days after, Burr and the Duc de Bassano were brought together at the house of M. Denon. The occasion was one of those grand breakfasts, which were fashionable at that time in Paris. The duc had evidently been prepossessed in favor of Burr, and on sitting down at the table (at half-past three in the afternoon) invited him to a seat next his own, the duchess and other ladies sitting opposite. Colonel Burr and the duc conversed much together during the repast; and, before they separated, the exile had told his story, and awakened in the minister a real interest in his fortunes. They talked much of Mexico. Burr said, "*it was not yet too late;*" but if Mexico were out of the question, he had but one favor to ask, permission to leave the empire. On leaving the saloon, the duc showed Colonel Burr very particular marks of favor, and "hoped he should have the honor soon to meet him again." From that day, he had a powerful friend at court, and the prospect of a return, one day, to his own country began to brighten.

Three months more of ante-chamber life elapsed before any thing decisive was done. M. Denon was zealous, Bassano was interested, Burr was importunate; but the emperor, then fondly anticipating the birth of the King of Rome, was, perhaps, not easily induced to attend to business of small importance to himself. At last, however, not far from the very birth-day of the imperial infant, Colonel Burr received, with unbounded delight, the official assurance that "his majesty had consented to his departure!" The Duc de Bassano, learning through M. Denon that Burr, in consequence of his long detention, was penniless and in debt, made the emperor's permission available, by lending him ten thousand francs.

One would suppose that his troubles were now over, and that nothing remained but to pay his debts, say good-by to

his friends, take passage in the diligence to the nearest sea port, and sail in the first ship to New York Doubtless he thought so himself. But never were reasonable anticipations more tantalizingly disappointed.

The passport wrung from the reluctant Russell was, as we have seen, of no avail until it had received the authorization of the French authorities, t obtain which it had to pass through three offices. Through the first, the document passed quickly enough, and was duly transmitted to the second, where it remained immovable for fourteen days. At the end of that period, Burr received a paper certifying, in the usual form, that the passport had passed the second office, and had been sent to the third. To the third he forthwith repaired, and, on applying for the passport, was handed an officially-written declaration that it had not been received. In inquiring from office to office for the missing passport, he spent *five weeks*, without getting any tidings of it whatever. He was then told that it was probably lost, and that the only thing to be done was to get another passport, and begin again. He did so. Contemplating now a delay of six weeks, and being still haunted with visions of wealth from the Holland Company, he resolved to improve the time by going to Holland. That country having been recently made an integral part of the French empire, there was no difficulty in his obtaining a passport for the journey.

He went to Holland, and invested seven thousand francs in Holland Company shares, with what result does not appear. He also endeavored to get access to the directors of the company, and to lay certain plans before them for the enhancement of its prosperity. The answer he received was, that the directors of the Holland Company would "hold no conference, nor have any intercourse with A. Burr;" a fact which he records in his diary without remark.

After spending a few days in Amsterdam, he made a rapid tour of the country, and, returning, had a very agreeable adventure. An American ship had been recently brought in, the *Vigilant*, Captain Combes, and was threatened with long detention, if not confiscation. On Burr's first visit to Amster-

dam, he had met Captain Combes, and heard the story of his misfortunes — but, on his return, he found the captain exulting over a permit to sail, and eager for Colonel Burr to return in his ship to America. He expressed an unbounded regard for Burr, said he had laid awake whole nights thinking of him; promised to fit up a cabin on any plan he might prefer, and declared that nothing would please him more than to serve him. The ship was a stanch and new one, of four hundred tons, and Burr accepted the captain's offer. Back he flew to Paris to get his passport, and complete his business there.

He found the passport just where he had left it. But now a new difficulty arose. The passport given him by Russell was made out for Bordeaux, from which port he had intended to sail. He now returned the document to the chargé, and requested him to change the port of departure to Amsterdam, stating his reasons, and informing him that there was no likelihood of a ship sailing from Bordeaux for many months. That obliging individual refused, point blank, to make the alteration.

This was, for a moment, a crushing disappointment, as in those days an "opportunity for America" from a port under control of the French emperor, was a very rare event, and the day named for the sailing of the *Vigilant* was close at hand. Burr consulted Baron Denon, who promptly informed the Duc de Bassano of the new dilemma. The duc, who was now very warmly interested for Burr, chanced to possess a piece of information respecting Russell, which enabled him to bring to bear upon his virtuous mind a controlling influence. The duc told M. Denon that there was a *person* through whom he could reach Mr. Russell, but that *she* was at the moment out of town. The duc wrote to the lady. She returned to Paris instantly, and, on the very day of her return, the duc received the passport. The next day Burr received it, with all the requisite official signatures, and on the day following, July 20th, 1811, he left Paris for ever.

This last difficulty had detained him a month in Paris, during which he saw the fêtes and reviews that accompanied the christening of the King of Rome.

One incident of his departure tempts us to linger for a moment. He received a note from a lady inclosing a parting present of a metallic pen, a novelty at that time. "May it be instrumental," she wrote, "in showing to posterity how much you have been the victim of the envy and injustice of your countrymen." His reply, in the style of the last century, when fine gentlemen were all adoration to fine ladies, is a good instance of the mode. "It is quite impossible for me, madame," he began, "to express, in a language of which I am ignorant, how much I was surprised and flattered by your charming little note, and the pen which accompanied it. Could I write the French like a Parisian, it would even then be equally difficult. I have read and re-read the note at least twenty times, and examined the pen. This was my amusement for one long day, which still appeared short. The next day, having to write to the minister, I determined to test the inspiration of this pen. At first I had much difficulty in persuading myself to use it, it was so beautiful, so brilliant. At last I filled it with ink, and sat myself down to write; but all my ideas (if I had any) were wandering. I could think but of you. Having in vain ransacked my brains for half an hour, I gave up the business for the time. The same result followed the second attempt. I have come to the conclusion, therefore, that the pen ought to be consecrated to friendship and sentiment, and never should be sullied by appropriating it to matters of business. The most interesting service in which it ever will be employed will be to express to you the devotedness with which I am your friend."

He went to Amsterdam, where a new obstacle to his departure presented itself. The long detention of the ship had run Captain Combes so deeply in debt that he could not leave without raising a considerable sum of money. Burr was his only resource, out of all the fifty passengers that were going in the ship; and Burr himself had not a third of the money. But he contrived to procure the necessary sum; and he tells Theodosia, in a very touching manner, how he procured it. "But how did I raise it? The reply contains a dreadful disclosure. I raised it by the sale of my little 'meubles' and

loose property. Among others, alas! my dear little Gamp's; it is shocking to relate, but what could I do? The captain said it was impossible to get out of town without five hundred guilders. He had tried every resource, and was in despair. The money must be raised, or the voyage given up. So, after turning it over, and looking at it, and opening it, and putting it to my ear like a baby, and kissing it, and begging you a thousand pardons out loud, your dear, little, beautiful watch was — was sold. I do assure you — but you know how sorry I was. If my clothes had been salable, they would have gone first, that's sure. But, heighho! when I get rich I will buy you a prettier one."

He now went to Helder, the port where the ship lay, and took up his quarters on board. He exulted at the prospect of departure. "I feel," he said, "as if I was already on the way and my heart beats with joy. Yet, alas! the country which I am so anxious to revisit will, perhaps, reject me with horror. * * * My windows look over the ocean; that ocean which separates me from all that is dear. With what pleasure I did greet it after three years' absence. I am never weary of looking at it. There seems to be no obstacle between us, and I almost fancy I see you and Gampy with the sheep about the door, and he 'driving the great ram with a little stick.'"

There were still some days of agonizing detention. But about the 1st of October, 1811, the *Vigilant* sailed, and Aaron Burr looked for the last time on the continent of Europe. Between the time when he received the emperor's permission to go and the time of his actual departure from his majesty's dominions, six months elapsed — six months of scarcely remitted exertion directed to the sole object of getting away.

That he should think ill of continental Europe, and, particularly, of the Napoleonic government, was but natural. "It is a melancholy fact, my friend," he wrote soon after to Lord Balgray, "that Europe is fast, very fast, rebarbarizing; retrograding with rapid strides to the darkest ages of intellectual and moral degradation; all that has been seen, or felt, or heard, or read of despotism; all other, past and present, is faint and feeble; it is freedom and ease compared with that which now

desolates Europe. *The science of tyranny was in its infancy; it is now matured.* Within the last fifteen years, greater ravages have been made on the dignity, the worth, and the rational enjoyments of human nature, than in any former ten centuries. All the efforts of genius, all the nobler sentiments and finer feelings, are depressed and paralyzed. Private faith, personal confidence, and the whole train of social virtues, are condemned and eradicated. They are crimes. And you, my friend even you, with all your generous propensities, your chivalrous notions of honor, and faith, and delicacy, were you condemned to live within the grasp of the tyrant, even you would discard them all, or you would be sacrificed as a dangerous subject."

What a cruel disappointment now awaited him! Before the ship sailed, he had been haunted by a vague fear that something might still happen to prevent the voyage; nor was it entirely without apprehension that he had observed from his cabin windows, British men-of-war cruising off the harbor. But the captain was confident of being allowed to pass, and Burr's fears subsided. But no sooner had the *Vigilant* put to sea than she was boarded by a British frigate. Officers and men came on board, and the ship was taken to Yarmouth, there to abide the decision of the admiralty, whether she should be condemned as a prize, or permitted to resume her voyage Thus, after all his labor, anxiety, and expenditure, Burr found himself again on the coast whence he had been driven more than two years before.

With characteristic audacity, he wrote forthwith to the superintendent of the alien office for permission to land and to go to London. He stated the cause of his presence at Yarmouth, and described himself as being "on board a small ship, very badly accommodated, with fifty-four passengers, of whom a majority were women and children, thirty-one sailors, thirty-three boys, and about one hundred other quadrupeds and bipeds." To his surprise, as well as delight, he promptly received the desired permission; and, what was still less to have been expected, he alone, of passengers and crew, was allowed to leave the ship. To London he went, where he received from Bentham, and his other London friends, a joyful and

affectionate welcome. As there seemed no near prospect, nor any certainty whatever, of the *Vigilant's* release, after waiting some weeks, he removed his effects from her, and was once more established as a resident in London. The ship was afterward released, but her destination was changed to New Orleans, where Colonel Burr had no wish to appear. He lost his passage money, and had no resource but the very scanty remains of the Duc de Bassano's loan, and the property that had survived the many *sans-sous* periods of his residence in Paris. For a short time, however, he was the guest of Jeremy Bentham, but soon resumed, in lodgings of his own, the character of a gentleman in difficulties.

Now followed a struggle with misfortune that would have been terrible to any man in the world but Aaron Burr. To him it was not terrible in the least.

It was soon apparent that a passage to America had become an affair of extreme difficulty. Few ships ventured to sail; and not every captain would have Aaron Burr for a passenger. In ships bound for New Orleans, he thought it undesirable to go. One or two "opportunities" for northern ports, he lost by accident. Twenty others slipped by because he had not the money to improve them. And thus it happened that he was detained in London nearly half a year.

One by one, the few articles of value which he possessed, his books, his watch, the few presents he had saved for his daughter and her boy, were pawned or sold. It soon became a fight for *mere* existence. He removed to furnished lodgings in Clerkenwell Close, "at eight shillings a week;" only the Godwins and one American friend being admitted to the secret. The weekly problem was, how to pay the rent, and lay in the week's stock of provisions and fuel. Scores of such entries as the following occur in the diary of this period:

"On my way home discovered that I must dine. I find my appetite in the inverse ratio to my purse; and I now conceive why the poor eat so much when they can get it. Considering the state of my finances, resolved to lay out the whole instantly in necessaries, lest some folly or some beggar should rob me of a shilling. Bought, viz., half a pound of beef,

eightpence; a quarter of a pound of ham, sixpence; one pound of brown sugar, eightpence; two pounds of bread, eightpence; ten pounds of potatoes, fivepence; having left elevenpence, treated myself to a pot of ale, eightpence; and now, with threepence in my purse, have read the second volume of Ida. My beef was boiled — so bought, I mean, and cooked my potatoes in my room. Made a great dinner. Ate at least one half of my beef. Of two great necessaries, coffee and tobacco, I have at least a week's allowance; so that, without a penny, I can keep the animal machine agoing for eight days."

Occasionally, we see him taking a chop at the "Hole in the Wall." Once he speaks of the *gentlemen* being shown into the parlor of a tavern, while he and other impecunious individuals were regaled with cold beef and pickles in the kitchen. At another time, he wrote: "Have left in cash two half-pence, which is much better than *one* penny, because they jingle, and thus one may refresh one's self with the music." Sometimes he could not write to Theodosia, because he had not "four and sixpence" to pay the postage. Often, he had nothing to eat but potatoes or bread. Once, he bought a pound of rice, and told Theodosia how "*it grieved him to find rice retailed at fourpence.*" How little he could have anticipated, on Theodosia's brilliant wedding-day, that he should ever contemplate her husband's rice plantations from *such* a point of view!

He was all activity in London, and tried many a curious expedient for getting money. In Paris he had had made a set of artificial teeth by the most celebrated dentist in Europe. He observed the process closely, became very intimate with the operator, brought with him to London a thousand of his teeth, and, in his extremity there, attempted to sell both the teeth and his own knowledge of the art of inserting them. But he found that the London dentists were not inferior to the French, and that they regarded the French teeth with contempt. Another of his projects was to test in England the process he had heard of in France, of making vinegar out of the sap of wood. He happened to mention the subject one

day to Brunel, the celebrated engineer, who was at once struck with the idea, and offered to engage with Burr in the experiment for their joint benefit. Down to Yarmouth rushed Burr instantly, to get a pamphlet on the subject which he had left on board the ship. It was lost. Not dismayed, he pushed his inquiries for some weeks, but never succeeded in making practicable vinegar.

He had a dream, too, of making a grand improvement in the steamboat, which, on his last visit to New York, he had seen navigating the Hudson at the rate of five miles an hour. It was a rage then to invent improvements in the steamboat. Burr's idea gave him no peace for several days. "Ruminating," he says, "after going to bed on the state of the treasury, the thing came up again, and engrossed me for at least three hours. I found it perfect; applied it to sea-vessels, to ships of war; in short, to every thing that floats. Sails, and masts, and rigging, and the whole science of seamanship, are become useless. My vessels go at the rate of twenty miles an hour, and am in hopes to bring them to thirty. From Charleston to New York will be a certain passage of thirty hours; from New York to London, of six days; but to tell half I did would fill a quire of paper." He could think of nothing else. He saw himself a millionaire, succoring distressed friends in London, bestowing fortunes upon "the faithful in the United States," and raining beautiful presents upon Gampillo. But, unfortunately, as he was walking one day in London, thinking out the details of his invention, suddenly an objection occurred to him. "It struck me," he says, "like electricity: my poor vessels lay motionless. It was just opposite Somerset House; I stopped short, and began to sacré and diable till awakened by the bustle of the passing crowd. The subject then lay pretty quiet till last night; during my vigils I found a complete remedy, and now away we go again. An experiment shall be made, very privately, however, and, if it fail, there shall be no one but you to laugh at me." As the Atlantic has not yet been crossed in six days, it may be presumed that the experiment did fail.

Another subject greatly interested him about the same

time. It was the Lancasterian method of instruction, which was just then coming into vogue in London. He visited the schools conducted on that system, and was delighted with what he saw. He also bought Lancaster's book, and sent it, with warm commendations, to his daughter.

Nor was Mexico forgotten; he never forgot it, while he had breath. But the English government, though it now exhibited no unfriendliness toward him, and, indeed, conceded to him every personal favor that he solicited, yet never showed the slightest interest in his plans, nor any wish to avail itself of his knowledge of Spanish American affairs.

As the spring of 1812 advanced, his desire to get to the United States became vehement. He began to believe that war between England and the United States was now, in spite of the reluctance of the American cabinet, a possible event, and it was very evident that he must get home before hostilities commenced, or be detained in Europe, perhaps, for many years. In the beginning of March he fell in, in the course of his ship-hunting, with one Captain Potter, of the ship *Aurora*, who offered to take him to Boston for thirty pounds, to keep the secret of his name, and to defy the wrath of the American consul, who had already dissuaded more than one captain from receiving Colonel Burr as a passenger. He determined to go, and, though nearly penniless, proceeded with his preparations for the voyage with the utmost confidence. But desperate was the struggle to get the money. Nearly every article he possessed that could be sold for money, was sold. Then he borrowed of the few friends with whom he was on terms that admitted of his asking such a favor. Bentham, alas! had himself fallen into difficulties, and was threatened by an illiberal government with a ruinous prosecution.

One ten pound note, he got in an unexpected and not quite pleasant manner. He was with Mr. Reeves, the superintendent of the alien office, and it occurred to him to offer Reeves his copy of Bayle's dictionary for ten pounds. Reeves asked why he wished to sell it. "I want the money," said Burr. Reeves agreed to buy the book, placed ten pounds in Burr's hands, and said, "You had better keep your Bayle, and send

re the ten pounds when you please." "The thing was so sudden," wrote Burr, "that I was not prepared to say any thing."

But he had not money enough yet. His fair friends were, as ever, active in his behalf. One of them ran about London all one day offering for sale a ring and watch of his. But her report was that the town was full of watches and bijouterie in the hands of distressed French and German nobles, and no jeweler would look at such things.

Every resource had failed. He resolved now upon what he called "a desperate and humiliating expedient." "I went," he said, "direct to Reeves, and told him that the ship was gone to Gravesend, and that I must lose my passage unless I could have twenty pounds. Without a word of reply, he drew a check on his banker for twenty pounds; and how I did gallop across the park to the said banker's to get my twenty pounds." His last regret was, that certain presents which he had long kept for Theodosia and her son, he could not redeem from pawn.

And now he was really going. His preparations were completed; his passage was secured; the ship was to sail to-morrow. At midnight, he wrote in his diary as follows: "And now, at twelve, having packed up my little residue of duds into that same unfortunate white sack, and stowed my scattered papers into my writing-case, I repose, smoking my pipe, and contemplating the certainty of *escaping* from this country, the certainty of seeing you. Those are my only pleasing anticipations. For as to my reception in my own country, so far as depends on the government, if I may judge from the conduct of their agents in every part of Europe, I ought to expect all the efforts of the most implacable malice. This, however, does not give me a moment's uneasiness. I feel myself able to meet and repel them. My private debts are a subject of some little solicitude; but a confidence in my own industry and resources does not permit me to despond, nor even to doubt. If there be nothing better to be done, I shall set about making money in every lawful and honorable way. But again, as to political persecution. The incapacity, for every purpose

of public administration, of our present rulers, and their total want of energy and firmness, is such, that it is impossible that such feeble and corrupt materials can long hold together, or maintain themselves in power or influence. Already there are symptoms of rapid and approaching decay and dissolution. Tell M. (Mr. Alston) to preserve his State influence, and not again degrade himself by compromising with rascals and cowards. My great and only real anxiety is for your health. If your constitution should be ruined, and you become the victim of disease, I shall have no attachment to life or motive to exertion."

The next morning at eight, he was at the office of the Gravesend coaches, where a few friends met him to say farewell. Gravesend, where the ship lay, and whence she was to sail *at noon*, is twenty miles from London. To the horror of the whole party, it was found that the morning coach had gone! The hours of departure had been recently changed. There was no other public conveyance of any kind till one o'clock. What was to be done? A friend suggested a post-chaise, but that would cost three guineas, and Burr had not a quarter of that sum. The same friend offered to lend the money "But," says Burr, "he is so poor, and having a wife and two children, that I could not in conscience take it, especially as Graves said the wind was ahead, and the ship could not possibly stir." So he waited for the one o'clock coach.

He reached Gravesend at five in the afternoon. The ship had started at noon, and was now five hours on her way down the river!

There was not a moment to be lost. He ran to the alien office to get his passport completed; for passports were then necessary for foreigners leaving England. The office was shut! He hunted up the clerk, got his signature to the passport, and hurried to the custom-house for an officer to examine his sack and writing-desk. That done, he hastened to the river to engage a boatman to row after the ship and put him on board. Not a boatman would stir under four guineas; as on such occasions, they combined to extort from a desperate voyager an enormous fee. Burr had not a single guinea! In this extremity,

he found a boatman not in the p ot to extort, who offered to put him on board for one guinea, provided he overtook the ship within twelve miles; if not, for two guineas. Burr had an acquaintance with him at Gravesend, who consented to cash an order for three guineas on his poor friend in London whose offer of a loan Burr had so considerately refused in the morning. His purse thus replenished, he embarked, just as the sun was setting, in a small skiff, rowed by two men, for a chase after the ship.

It was a cold evening in March. Burr, with no overcoat, was chilled to the bone, as the boat shot down the river in the wind's teeth. When the twelve miles were passed, he was told that the ship was ten miles further. By this time he was so benumbed with cold that he could neither stand nor move; and he induced the boatmen, by a promise of some grog, to stop at a little tavern by the river side for him to warm himself. He had to be lifted out of the boat; but a good fire and a cup of tea soon restored him, and they again embarked. This time he was perfectly comfortable, as he bought a bundle of straw and placed it in the boat for a bed, and the boatmen lent him their overcoats for a covering. In five minutes he was *fast asleep*, and remained unconscious of any thing till midnight, when the boatmen woke him to announce the delightful fact that they were alongside the *Aurora*. They had rowed twenty-seven miles, and demanded three guineas for their labor. He paid it, and went on board the ship without one penny. The captain got up to receive him; they sat talking for an hour, and then Colonel Burr, refreshed by his three hours' sleep on board the boat, went to his cabin and wrote an account in his journal of the day's thrilling adventures.

"I hope," he concluded, "never to visit England again, unless at the head of fifty thousand men. I shake the dust off my feet; adieu, John Bull. Insula inhospitabilis, as it was truly called eighteen hundred years ago." Men must be allowed to speak of the market according to the demand in it for their own wares.

He found the captain and passengers alarmed lest war should be declared before they reached Boston, and thus the ship be

exposed to capture. "But," said Burr, "I have no such apprehensions. I believe that our present administration will not declare war. If the British should hang or roast every American they can catch, and seize all their property, no war would be declared by the United States under present rulers. When Porter's war resolutions first came, I considered them mere empty, unmeaning wind; and that all the subsequent measures are merely to keep up the spirits and coherence of the party till the elections should be over · those elections for State legislatures which will decide the next presidential election. But J. Madison & Co. began this game too soon, and I doubt whether all the tricks they can play off will keep up the farce till the month of May. I treat their war-prattle as I should that of a bevy of boarding-school misses who should talk of making war; show them a bayonet or a sword, and they run and hide. Now, at some future day, we will read this over, and see whether I know those folks. I did not dare write any such things while on shore, for I never felt perfectly secure against another seizure."

Just sixty-three days after this confident prophecy was written, namely, on the 18th of May, 1812, war was declared. But, by that time, the good ship *Aurora* was safe in Boston harbor.

Colonel Burr sailed under the name of *Arnot*, for the assumption of which he had the express permission of the authorities of the British alien office. The captain kept his secret. "Mr. Arnot," wrote Burr, "is a grave, silent, strange sort of animal, insomuch that we know not what to make of him." May 4th, he wrote: "A pilot is in sight, and within two miles of us. All is bustle and joy, except Gamp. Why should he rejoice?"

That afternoon, after a passage of five weeks, the *Aurora* was made fast to one of the Boston wharfs. Every passenger but one went immediately on shore. The captain and mate also left the ship in the course of the afternoon.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE EXILE'S WELCOME HOME.

ALONE IN THE SHIP — GOES ON SHORE IN DISGUISE — ADVENTURES AT THE CUSTOM HOUSE — DETENTION IN BOSTON — INTERVIEW WITH THE OLD SOLDIER — THE COLLEGE CLASSMATE — RECOGNIZED BY A LADY — GOOD NEWS FROM SWARTWOUT — SAILS IN A SLOOP FOR NEW YORK — FINDS RELATIVES ON BOARD — STARTLING INCIDENT — BURR NARRATES HIS ARRIVAL IN THE CITY — CONCEALED FOR TWENTY DAYS — ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS ARRIVAL — SUCCESSFUL BEGINNING OF BUSINESS — DREADFUL NEWS FROM THEODOSIA — DEATH OF THEODOSIA — THE FATHER'S GRIEF — ANECDOTE.

IT was the silent *Mr. Arnot* who remained on board the *Aurora*. After sending letters to the post-office, one directed to Theodosia, and another to Samuel Swartwout, that "strange" individual dined with the pilot and second mate on salt beef, potatoes, and sea-biscuit, and then fell with far keener appetite upon a file of Boston papers.

All that day, and through the succeeding night, a storm of wind, rain, and hail raged round the ship with a fury seldom seen so late in the spring, even at Boston. The ship broke from her moorings, and was dashed with violence against another vessel. The deck and bulwarks were glazed with ice, and the wind roared through the icy rigging. But Burr sat late over his papers in the cabin quite absorbed — for he had a world of news to learn, and his fate might be foreshadowed in a paragraph. As the night drew on, the last sailor stole away over the ship's side, and went to seek his pleasure in the town; and long before Burr "turned in," he was alone in the *Aurora*. Not a creature slept in the ship but him.

Such was the returning exile's first welcome to the country which his fathers had honored, and which had once been well pleased to honor him. He thought lightly of it. When a more furious gust than usual thundered above his head, it oc-

curred to him what an absurd voyage he should make if the ship should be blown out to sea, and he all alone in her.

The next morning, as he found there was neither fuel, food, nor cook on board the ship, he was compelled to go on shore. During the voyage, by the sale of some books, he had contrived to raise thirty-two dollars, and to buy or borrow of one of the passengers a large, old-fashioned wig. He had, also, devoted leisure moments to the development of as much whisker as his countenance was capable of. His clothes, too, were selected with a view to giving him a different air and contour from those he had been wont to exhibit. Disguised thus with wig, whiskers, and strange garments, *Mr. Arnot* went on shore, and took board in a small, plain boarding-house, near the wharf, kept by the widow of a sea-captain.

His disguise was soon subjected to a terrible test. It was necessary to go to the custom-house and get a permit to land his effects, signed by the collector. On inquiry he learned that the collector was Mr. Dearborn (a son of General Dearborn, Jefferson's Secretary of War), who had sat often with Colonel Burr at his father's table, and knew him as well as he did his own brother. The Dearborn family, moreover, had shown particular animosity to Burr since his misfortunes, and it was certain that if the collector recognized him, he would instantly send the news of his arrival to Washington. Let Burr tell the story of this adventure.

"I took with me," he wrote in his diary, "a young man to show me the way to the custom-house, and entered with all possible composure; passed under the nose of Mr. Dearborn into the adjoining room, where the first part of the business was to be done. The officer to whom I was directed asked me to enumerate my effects; for this I was not prepared, supposing that the list of them would be taken from the manifest. Nevertheless, I repeated them off as fast as he could write, though they consisted of eighteen different articles; trunks, boxes, portmanteaus, bundles, rolls, etc. He then bade me sign my name to it, which I did, thus: *A. Arnot;* I think that is very like it. Then he directed me to take it to the collector, who would sign it: here was the rub. I told the young

man, my conductor, to take it and get it signed for me, for that I was obliged to run as fast as possible to see after my things, the ship being just about to haul out. He took it, and I got out as fast as I could, passing again under the nose of Dearborn. I do assure thee that I felt something lighter when I got down into the street. But my trouble and danger were not yet ended. When I got to the wharf, all my effects were already lying pell-mell on the ground, and two tide-waiters there, ready to examine them on the spot. As every body here is now idle by reason of the embargo, there were collected more than five hundred people to see what was going forward. Trunks, boxes, bundles, every one opened, and rummaged to the bottom. In many of the books my name was written, but it happened that he did not open in that page. Every parcel of letters showed also the name of A. Burr; but, as I assisted in the search, I took care how I presented these parcels to him. The ceremony lasted about two hours, and I was another hour repacking; working and sweating like a horse, the mob crowding round to see the strange things. Of the number present, it is probable that more than half had seen me before; and I expected every minute to hear some one exclaim, 'Colonel Burr, by ——!' But I heard nothing. Finally, got all to my lodgings, the whole expense being six dollars."

But why such extreme fear of recognition? There were excellent reasons for it. The government prosecutions still hung suspended over his head; and Madison, who had been so importunate sixteen years before, in urging General Washington to send Burr as embassador to France, had imbibed all Jefferson's aversion to him. And secondly, two of Burr's largest creditors in New York held executions against him, and would probably throw him into jail for debt the very hour he should appear in the city. It was therefore necessary for him to remain concealed in Boston until the receipt of information from his friends in New York through Swartwout.

In 1812 it required five days to get an answer from New York through the mail. The five days passed; no letter. A week; no letter. Knowing well the promptness of Swart-

wout and his impregnable fidelity, he concluded that the letter had miscarried, and wrote again. Two weeks passed; still no answer. Meanwhile, his stock of money was running frightfully low. It was very characteristic of the man, that in this crisis of his fate, when he had just twenty-six dollars in the world, he lent sixteen dollars to his landlady. "How very prudent," he wrote. "But don't scold. I am sure they will repay it." It was repaid, just as his store was reduced to a five cent piece. Then a fellow passenger called to borrow ten dollars of Mr. Arnot, which that gentleman lent with the air of a Vice-President. In the very nick of time, that, too, was repaid. He attempted to raise a little money on one or two articles of jewelry which he had tried in vain to sell in London; but no one was willing to give any thing like their value for them. Something must be done, or he would soon be so deeply in debt as not to be able to leave the town. Borrowing a directory — not a voluminous work at that day — he pored over its pages to find the name of some person whom he could trust — some one among the thousands that would have been proud to welcome him ten years before, who would not spurn and betray him now. He lighted upon the name of a man who had been under his command on the Quebec expedition in 1775. He had not seen him since; but as he had never known a man that had served under him in war, who was not ever after his devoted friend, he determined to call upon this old soldier. Burr used to relate this interview with infinite glee. Going up to the door of a handsome house, he plied the knocker, and an infirm old gentleman soon appeared.

"Does Mr. —— live here?"

He did.

"Is he at home?"

He was at home.

"Can I see him?"

"I am the person," said the old gentleman.

Burr bowed, and lowering his voice, said, "I am Aaron Burr."

"What! the Aaron Burr who was Vice-President of the United States?"

"The same."

"You *baint!*" exclaimed the old soldier, astounded and bewildered at the intelligence.

In a manner much too deferential for Burr's present purpose, he invited him in. They went into the parlor, where Burr soon learned that the old man, after a life of industry, had now retired from business with a decent independence. But he treated his former commander with such extreme respect, that Burr was compelled, much against his will, to play the great man and distinguished guest, and actually came away, without so much as mentioning the object of his visit. The old soldier returned his call, and showed him many friendly attentions, but they never reached the awful subject of pecuniary aid.

Recurring to the directory, he found the name of a college classmate, who, up to the time of his departure for Europe, had always professed friendship for him. To this man, who was very rich, he sent a note, announcing his presence in Boston, and requesting an interview. The rich man replied that he had great respect for Colonel Burr and bore him much good will; but, *but* — his position was very delicate — he would *think* of it, and, if he did not call he would write. Burr made the following comment in his diary: "Now, I engage he will do neither one nor the other. When a man takes time to consider whether he will do a good or civil action, be assured he will never do it. The baser feelings, the calculations of interest and timidity, always prevail. But did you ever hear of such meanness? This very J. Mason was at Richmond during the trial, saw all the vile persecutions which I encountered, and spoke of them with indignation and contempt; came often to see me, and openly avowed a friendship for me. He is immensely wealthy, and not a candidate for any office. What should restrain such a man from expressing his feelings? Timidity." He was correct in his prediction. Mason neither came nor wrote. In his dire extremity Burr wrote again, requesting him to advance a sum of money upon his books, some of which were rare (in America) and valuable. Mason coldly replied, that "he had retired

from mercantile business, and it was therefore inconvenient for him to make advances." How admirably Burr bore such cruel, cutting slights! If, for an instant, he was stung into anger, reflection soon came to his aid, reminding him of the allowances always to be made for uncultivated human nature, *subjected* from infancy to the twin tyrants, FEAR and DESIRE.

He called upon a lady whom he had known and benefited in other days, whom he had not seen for sixteen years, and who was now infirm and half blind. At the first glance, she penetrated his disguise. With an air of astonishment and delight, she called him by name, seized his hand, welcomed him with enthusiasm, summoned her son, and showed him all possible respect and attention. But she was poor, and she was a lady, and the financial problem was not spoken of between them.

Fifteen days after his arrival, came the letter from Swartwout, breathing hope and promise. His old friends in New York, Swartwout assured him, were still true and warm; his old enemies not inclined to be vindictive. The two creditors, however, were inexorable; nothing would satisfy them but payment or approved security. He was strongly inclined to go at once to New York, let the executions take their course, and submit to reside within the "limits." "To this," he wrote to his daughter, "I should have no great repugnance in point of pride or feeling, but there are two objections pretty cogent; first and principally, *you*. I fear your little heart would sink to hear that Gamp was on the limits. To be sure, if you could come there and see how gay he was, be supported by the light of his countenance, and catch inspiration from his lips, you would forget that he was not in paradise." Besides, he had a project of matrimony, which would be defeated by his confinement within the limits. "You have already," he added, "suffered too much on my account, and I come now to sacrifice myself for you in any way and every way; that of marriage is one, and no hope of that while a prisoner; and as to the payment of my debts, if I am confined to the mere practice of the law, debarred from all those speculations in which

I might engage if at large, it will be the work of many years, and in all that time I could do you little or no good."

What were his surprise and delight to read in Theodosia's first letter, not merely that she could bear his going into confinement, but that she spontaneously recommended it. He was resolved. He would go to New York, whatever the consequences.

It was the treasury of Harvard University that had the honor of paying Colonel Burr's passage, per sloop, from Boston to New York. The old soldier had communicated, in the strictest confidence, of course, the fact of Burr's presence in Boston to a select circle of friends, among whom was Dr. Kirkland, the President of the University. He also intimated to the doctor, that Burr, as he conjectured, had more books and less money than was convenient. Whereupon the doctor having expressed a desire for an interview, and a willingness to buy for the college library Burr's Bayle and Moreri, he was gratified in both particulars. He passed an hour tête-á-tête with Colonel Burr, and paid him forty dollars for the books, leaving it to the seller's choice to take back the books and accept the money as a loan. The next day found him on board the sloop, his debts discharged, his passage (twenty dollars) paid, waiting for wind and tide to waft him on his way.

Now, he had chosen this mode of traveling for the purpose of avoiding recognition, and had selected this particular sloop because neither captain, crew, nor passengers belonged to New York. His feelings may be imagined when he found that the captain and most of the cabin passengers were *his own relations* — people from Fairfield, Connecticut, where his father was born, and where he had spent some of the happiest days of his own youth. The captain's wife, in particular, was wonderfully like his own sister. "The same large mouth, replete with goodness, sweetness, and firmness; the same large, aquiline nose, contour of face, and the two dimples; and, when disturbed, knits the brow and forehead in the same singular manner; the form of the eye the same; very long; the color not quite so dark. There is only wanting the broad forehead of ma soœur to be perfect. The same commanding figure,

Many of her attitudes and movements, of which, you know, every human being has something peculiar. I look at her for hours together with an inexpressible interest, particularly while sleeping; but I speak not for fear of betraying myself. She must be a relative; but, thus far, I have not learned her family name. I dare not question any one, from apprehensions of being questioned in return."

This lady, he found, was his cousin. One day, some one asked her for whom a boy's hat which she had in her hand was intended.

"*For Burr*," she replied.

"Your brother?" inquired Burr.

"No; my nephew."

At Fairfield, while the sloop was at anchor, he was asked by his cousin, Thaddeus Burr, to go fishing. He declined, of course. After looking for many hours with longing eyes upon the familiar coast, he ventured to go ashore. "I strolled three or four hours round some miles in the neighborhood. Every object was as familiar to me as those about Richmond Hill, and the review brought up many pleasant and whimsical associations. At several doors I saw the very lips I had kissed and the very eyes which had ogled me in the persons of their grandmothers about six-and-thirty years ago. I did not venture into any of their houses, lest some of the grandmothers might recollect me." He afterward went to the captain's house, where a startling incident occurred. He was sitting reading a newspaper, when a voice behind him suddenly exclaimed,

"Ah! Burr, how goes it?"

He looked round with doubtful glance, and discovered, to his great relief, that the individual addressed was one whose middle name was Burr, and who was commonly called by it.

The voyage lasted nine days. At twilight on the 8th of June, the captain of the sloop, fearing to run through Hurl Gate at so late an hour, came to for the night at a wharf outside, to Burr's infinite disappointment; for it was essential to his plan that he should reach New York after dark. The

last page of the diary narrates with graphic brevity the incidents of this evening.

"To add to my chagrin, there came to the wharf from the house an old man, who asked if any of us would walk up. The voice was very familiar to me, and I desired the mate, who was near me, to ask who kept that tavern. "Billy Mariner," says the same voice; a fellow who had known me familiarly since I was eight years old. At this moment there hove in sight a very small sail-boat, standing down. The sloop's barge being alongside, I engaged two of the men for a dollar to put me on board that sail-boat, which was done, and thus I found myself again with the prospect of arriving at the hour I wished. The sail-boat proved to be a pleasure-boat belonging to two young farmers of Long Island. They were not bound to New York, but to the Narrows, but very kindly agreed to put me on shore in the city. When we got opposite the city the wind wholly failed us; and the tide, now very rapid, set us over to the Long Island shore; and we, having no oars, were wholly at its mercy. It seemed inevitable that I must make a voyage to the Narrows, for they could not now get to the Long Island land so as to set me on shore. When we were nearly opposite the Battery I heard the noise of oars, and hailed; was answered; and I begged them to come alongside. It proved to be two vagabonds in a skiff, probably on some thieving voyage. They were very happy to set me on shore in the city for a dollar, and at half past eleven I was landed; and S. S. having given me his address, 66 Water-street, thither I went cheerfully, and rejoicing in my good fortune. I knocked and knocked, but no answer. I knocked still harder, supposing they were asleep, till one of the neighbors opened a window and told me that nobody lived there I asked where lived Mr. S. Of that she knew nothing. I was now to seek a lodging. But very few houses were open. Tried at two or three taverns, all full; cruised along the wharf, but could find no place. It was now midnight, and nobody to be seen in the street. To walk about the whole night would be too fatiguing. To have sat and slept on any stoop would have been thought no hardship; but then, the

danger that the first watchman who might pass would take me up as a vagrant and carry me up to the watch-house, was a dénouement not at all to my mind. I walked on, thinking that in the skirts of the town I might meet at that hour some charitable personne, who, for one or two dollars and l'amour de Dieu, would give me at least half a bed; but seeing in an alley a light in the cellar of a small house, I called and asked for a lodging; was answered yes; shown into a small garret, where were five men already asleep; a cot and a sort of cover-lid was given me. I threw open the window to have air, lay down, and slept profoundly till six. Being already dressed, I rose, paid for my lodging twelve cents, and sallied out to 66 Water-street, and there had the good luck to find Sam. alone. He led me immediately to the house of his brother Robert, and here I am, in possession of Sam.'s room in Stone-street, in the city of New York, on this 8th day of June, anno Dom. 1812. Just four years since we parted at this very place."

The day was spent in quiet consultation. In the evening, Colonel Burr went to the house of a lady in Nassau-street who had been his fast friend through all his misfortunes. She was overjoyed to see him. It was as though he had dropped from the clouds. The family gathered round, overwhelming him with congratulations and welcome. He told the lady his design, to begin again the practice of the law, to forswear politics, to toil for his creditors and for Theodosia. Her reply was:

"Colonel, here shall be your office; that suite of rooms is yours, as long as you need or desire them."

The frank and gallant offer was accepted.

He lay concealed for some weeks, until assurances were received that the government would not molest him, and until means were found to mollify the rigor of his creditors. It was not till twenty days after his arrival in New York that the newspapers gave the first intimation of his presence in the country, when the following paragraph appeared in the *New York Columbian:* "Colonel Burr, says a Boston paper of Wednesday, once so celebrated for his talents, and latterly so much talked of for his sufferings, arrived at Newburyport

from France and England, and passed through this town on his way to New York." The next day, the editor added that Colonel Burr had spent ten days in Boston *incog.* After that, no further allusion to his arrival appears — the papers and the public mind being full of the declaration of war, the assassination of Mr. Perceval, and the proposed nomination of De Witt Clinton, Burr's triumphant rival, to the presidency.

At the right moment he caused a line to appear in a newspaper to the effect that, "Aaron Burr had returned to the city and had resumed the practice of the law at —— Nassau-street."

Its appearance electrified the city. Before Colonel Burr slept that night, five hundred gentlemen called upon him. The feeling for the moment seemed to be general throughout the city, that he had been treated with undue severity, and that the past should be buried in oblivion. Colonel Troup, whom Burr had assisted with money and with books to get into the profession of the law thirty years before, and who had since made a fortune by its practice, and retired, now in part repaid his early benefactor by lending him his law library.

Burr had a very small tin sign, bearing only his name, nailed up in front of the house, and commenced business. Beginning with a cash capital of less than ten dollars, and that borrowed, he received, for opinions and retaining fees, in the course of his first twelve business days, the sum of two thousand dollars! It was a time of trouble to the community, and, therefore, of harvest to lawyers, and clients were eager for the services of the man who never lost a case. The future began to wear a brighter hue of promise than it had known for many a year. The father wrote cheerfully to the daughter, acquainting her with the happy turn his fortunes had taken, and anticipating the day when they should meet again after the longest separation they had ever known.

Alas! misery was impending over him, so acute and ir remediable, so far transcending all he had yet experienced, that it may be truly said of him in this month of June, 1812, that his sorrows were yet to *begin!* A strange fortune was Aaron Burr's, to have uninterrupted success and prosperity in

the first half of his life, and then nothing *but* failure and disaster, in ever accumulating force, until, the very capacity to suffer being exhausted, nothing could touch him further!

About six weeks after his return to New York, he received Theodosia's reply to his cheering letters, in these heart-rending words: "A few miserable days past, my dear father, and your late letters would have gladdened my soul; and even now I rejoice at their contents as much as it is possible for me to rejoice at any thing; but there is no more joy for me; the world is a blank. I have lost my boy. My child is gone for ever. He expired on the 30th of June. My head is not now sufficiently collected to say any thing further. May Heaven, by other blessings, make you some amends for the noble grandson you have lost." Governor Alston added: "One dreadful blow has destroyed us; reduced us to the veriest, the most sublimated wretchedness. That boy, on whom all rested; our companion, our friend — he who was to have transmitted down the mingled blood of Theodosia and myself — he who was to have redeemed all your glory, and shed new luster upon our families — that boy, at once our happiness and our pride, is taken from us — *is dead.*"

It was a dreadful blow, indeed. The boy, only eleven years old, had shown all those early signs of talent and courage which were peculiarly dear to Colonel Burr and his daughter. Tradition reports him to have been a beautiful child, and of an air so superior that he had, even at that age, acquired a kind of celebrity in the narrow circle of South Carolina society. Burr was passionately fond of him. The boy was always in his thoughts. Wherever he went, he spoke of his noble, gallant little grandson, and told little stories of his courage, wit, and tenderness. How many hundreds of miles he had walked in Paris and London to procure books, coins, and trinkets for him, and how many hundreds more in rescuing them from pawnbrokers and jewelers! What dreams he had indulged of Gampillo's future greatness! *He* was to be the perfect man. In *him*, at length, were to be blended strength and gentleness, intelligence and grace — all worthy qualities, and all shining ones. *He* was to realize Chesterfield's beau ideal

- - a man of Saxon heart, brain, and muscle, with Celtic quickness, wit, and polish! And this boy was dead. The stricken grandsire shed few tears, but he ceased to mourn his loss only with his life. The mention of the subject would start the tear, but this man of iron would fold his arms tightly over his breast, as if, by the exertion of mere physical strength, to repress the rising tide of emotion. He tried to console the bereaved mother, but she was inconsolable — she would not be comforted. "Whichever way I turn," she wrote, a month after the event, "the same anguish still assails me. You talk of consolation. Ah! you know not what you have lost. I think Omnipotence could give me no equivalent for my boy; no, none — none."

But he had not drained the cup. A deeper and bitterer draught was yet in reserve.

Theodosia languished. She waited some months at her home in the South, for a safe and suitable opportunity to journey northward, to draw strength and hope from the source that had never failed her — her father's inspiring presence. But her husband was now Governor of the State and general of militia. The country was at war with Great Britain, and he could not leave his post. She would have come alone by land in her own carriage, but it chanced that their coachman was a drunkard, and needed the eye of a master. It was resolved, at last, that she should go by sea, and her father sent a physician from New York to superintend the embarkation and attend her on the passage — for she was, by this time, sadly emaciated, and very weak. Her passage was taken in a small schooner named the *Patriot*, which, after a privateering cruise, had put into Charleston, and was about to return to New York with her guns stowed below. She was commanded by an experienced captain, and had for sailing master an old New York pilot, noted for his skill and courage. The vessel was famous for her sailing qualities, and, it was confidently expected, would perform the voyage to New York in five or six days. She sailed with a fair and gentle wind from Charleston, on the last day but one of the year 1812, Theodosia, her physician, and her maid, occupying the principal cabin.

The *Patriot* was never seen nor heard of again! A few days after she left Charleston, a storm of extreme violence raged along the whole coast; during which, in all probability, the vessel with all on board went down off Cape Hatteras.

The agonies of suspense endured by the husband and the father, the eager letters written by each to tell the other she had not arrived, the weary waiting for the mail, the daily hope, the daily despair, the thousand conjectures that arose to give a moment's relief—all this can neither be imagined nor described. For months, the agonized father could not go upon the Battery, then the chief promenade of the city of New York, without looking wistfully down toward the Narrows, with a secret pining hope that even yet the missing vessel might appear. It was long before he could relinquish the idea that some outward-bound ship might have rescued the passengers, and carried them away to a distant port, whence soon the noble Heart would return to bless her father's life. By-and-by, some idle tales were started in the newspapers, that the *Patriot* had been captured by pirates, and all on board murdered except Theodosia, who was carried on shore a captive.

"No, no," said Burr to a friend who mentioned the groundless rumor, "she is indeed *dead*. She perished in the miserable little pilot-boat in which she left Charleston. Were she alive, all the prisons in the world could not keep her from her father. When I realized the truth of her death, the world became a blank to me, and life had then lost all its value." To his son-in-law he wrote that he felt "severed from the human race."

During the period of suspense, he never expressed his feelings in words. He went about his daily business wearing a serene countenance, for he held it to be an affront to exhibit to others a face of gloom. When he could no longer resist the feeling of certainty that Theodosia was lost, he quietly put out of sight every object which was peculiarly associated with her, every thing which her tasteful hands had made or adorned, every thing that had once been hers. For a long time, *Theodosia* was a name banished from the vocabulary of

his house. Two or three years after her loss, he received from South Carolina a large box containing articles which had belonged to her, and some relics of her mother which she had preserved all her life. He opened the box and recognized the familiar things. Then, going into an adjoining room, where a very intimate friend was sitting, he said,

"I have something to show you."

He led him by the hand to the open trunk, and, in a voice shaken with emotion, said,

"*What a fate*, poor thing!"

He closed the trunk, without another word, placed it out of sight, and made no further allusion to it for a long time. Some of the objects which so deeply moved him upon that occasion are still in existence, and in the possession of individuals to whom he gave them twenty years later, and to whom they are a precious possession.

Theodosia was a nearly complete realization of her father's ideal of a woman. With a great deal of wit, spirit, and talent, and possessing the elegant vivacity of manner which he so much admired, and a face strikingly beautiful, and strikingly peculiar, she also inherited all that a daughter could inherit of her father's courage and fortitude. In both solid and elegant accomplishments she was very far superior to the ladies of her time. After shining in the circles of New York, she led the society of South Carolina, until the time of her father's misfortunes, when she shared his ostracism in both places, and was proud to share it. Her love for her father was more like passion than filial affection. Her faith in his honor and in his worth was absolute and entire. Immovable in that faith, she could cheerfully have braved the scorn, the derision of a world. She would have left all to follow him. She would have renounced her husband, if her husband had faltered in his duty to a father-in-law whose fault, whatever it was, he had shared. No father ever more loved a child, nor more laboriously proved his love, than Aaron Burr. No child ever repaid a father's care and tenderness, with a love more constant and devoted than Theodosia. That such a woman could so entirely love and believe in him, was the fact

which first led the writer of these lines to suspect that the Aaron Burr who actually lived and walked these streets must have been a very different being indeed from the Aaron Burr of the popular imagination. Not necessarily a *good* man, in the noblest sense of that greatest of words; but, certainly, not the monster he is thought.

It was a maxim of the "Burr School" (as surviving friends of Colonel Burr still call his system of life), to accept the Inevitable without repining. He held it weakness to mourn, and wisdom to enjoy. After losses, he maintained, we should hold all the faster to what is *left*, and enjoy it. This was his principle; and he acted upon it; and was prone to undervalue those who did not. If it had been his fortune to go before his daughter to the other world, he would have told her with his dying breath that if she desired truly to honor his memory, she must be happy, and a source of happiness when he was gone. Therefore, though the loss of his daughter and her boy had taken from his life its object and its charm, he exhibited to the world a composed demeanor, and strove, in all ways, to enjoy the passing hour. Time heals or assuages all wounds. He put his grief away from him. He would *not* be sorrowful.

It seemed as though, to the end of his life, he was more tender and loving to all the children he ever met for Gampillo's sake. Some months after these events, he chanced one day, on a journey to Albany, to visit some very old friends near Newburg, whom he had not seen for a long time. He knocked at the door of the house two or three times, and no one came; when, presuming on his intimacy with the family, he pushed open the front door, and entered a parlor. There he was shocked to see, lying in an open coffin, the body of a child whom he had known as the delight of the household, and of whose sickness even he had not heard. He was observed by a servant to gaze with singular intensity upon the countenance of the dead child, and to sit down by its side, covering his face with his hands. Then he rose and left the house. A few days after, he wrote a letter to the afflicted

family, apologizing for his strange behavior. "Ever since the event," he wrote, "which separated me from mankind, I have been able neither to give nor to receive consolation." That "event," they supposed, was the duel with Hamilton — so little did they know of the man they had known so long.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ANECDOTES AND REMINISCENCES OF HIS LATER YEARS.

POPULAR NOTION OF BURR'S LATER YEARS — HIS DEBTS — STARTS GENERAL JACKSON FOR THE PRESIDENCY — THE MEDCEF EDEN CASE — REMARKABLE CASE OF INCEST — INTERVIEW WITH HENRY CLAY — SCENE BETWEEN BURR AND GENERAL SCOTT — BURR REVISITS THE SCENE OF THE DUEL — BURR'S MEETING WITH MRS. HAMILTON — BURR AND VANDERLYN THE PAINTER — RECOLLECTIONS OF DR. WOODBRIDGE — HIS RELIGIOUS BELIEF — HIS OPINION OF THE BIBLE — ANECDOTES — GENEROSITY OF BURR — ANECDOTES — STORY OF BURR AND GENERAL JACKSON — BURR'S OPINION OF JACKSON — BURR'S HALE OLD AGE — BURR AND FANNY KEMBLE.

THERE is no part of the long life of Aaron Burr, respecting which the popular idea is more at variance with the truth, than the period which we now enter upon. That popular idea is forcibly expressed by the concluding words of a writer in the old New York *Review* (January, 1838) — a writer whose profession and whose errors should have conspired to render just, if not charitable:

"With the recklessness produced by a present which had no comfort, and a future which had no hope, he (Aaron Burr) surrendered himself without shame to the groveling propensities which had formed his first step on the road to ruin, until at last, overcome by disease, in the decay of a worn-out body, and the imbecility of a much-abused mind, he lay a shattered wreck of humanity, just entering upon eternity with not enough of *man* left about him to make a Christian out of. Ruined in fortune, and rotten in reputation, thus passed from the busy scene one who might have been a glorious actor in it; and when he was laid in the grave, decency congratulated itself that a nuisance was removed, and good men were glad that God had seen fit to deliver society from the contaminating contact of a festering mass of moral putrefaction."

It would be difficult to put into words a statement more false than this sounding, shameful, pitiless paragraph. It

would have been so easy to find out the truth about Colonel Burr's last years in 1838. It has not been very difficult in 1857; for there are still several persons living whose recollections of him in those years are full and accurate, and who have been more than willing to tell what they know. Groveling propensities! A more delicate creature never lived in masculine form than Aaron Burr. A man of refined appetite; in no bad sense a sensualist; abhorring *gross* pleasures, pursuits, and persons. Look at his face! Is it the face of a sensualist? But I reserve this subject for consideration in another chapter, and proceed to narrate here such events and incidents of this period of his life as seem worthy of brief record.

Observe, first, the circumstances of the man. He is declining into the vale of years; he is fifty-seven years old. He is alone in the world. The excitement produced by his sudden arrival in the city soon subsided, and the old odium gathered thick about him. From the first, he took the honorable, the right resolution of knowing those only who first recognized him. Thus he acquired the habit, which many will remember, of glancing under his eyelids at an approaching acquaintance to see whether or not he meant to cut him. Usually the approaching acquaintance had that intention, and was deprived of the opportunity by Colonel Burr's looking another way. Thus the circle of his acquaintance grew ever narrower, until it included few beside his clients and his tried friends, whose friendship dated back to revolutionary times. For, if there is a noble element in human nature which inclines us to take the weaker side, there is a base principle, too, which urges us to join in a hue and cry. He made not the slightest endeavor to set himself right with the public. He never sought friends. Besides the general causes of odium, half a dozen influential families of the city imagined that it was part of their duty to the dead to heap obloquy upon the living. There was a "set" who took the infamy of Aaron Burr in charge, and nursed it, and never let it cease growing until it filled the world.

He was beleaguered with creditors, some of whom had bought expedition debts for a fraction of their face, and were clamorous for payment. A large proportion of the immense

expenses incurred during his trial had never been paid. There were his debts, too, to the Duc de Bassano, and others in Europe, which had peculiar claims; and, beside, there was a silent, but needy company of relations and near connections who had advanced money they could ill spare in aid of the expedition. Of old debts incurred in prosperous days, there were several thousand dollars. Many had been ruined by the failure of the expedition, whom Colonel Burr felt bound to assist in their extremity, and from whose application he could never, to his last breath, turn away. The least meritorious of his creditors were, of course, the most relentless; and he resolved, from the beginning, not to attempt to pay, until he could pay justly — until he saw a prospect of paying a proportion to all.

The largeness of the sum which he had received in the first few days of his practice, was due to a variety of unusual circumstances; a large part of it was payment for services yet to be rendered, The most prudent of men, in his situation, could not have saved for his creditors more than a very few thousands a year, and Aaron Burr, in his use of money, was never prudent. He was one of those who are constitutionally incapable of driving a good bargain *for himself* — through whose fingers money slips in an unaccountable manner.

Desperate were his first struggles with this mass of indebtedness. Without capital to speculate with, his only source of income was the practice of his profession in a city where it soon became a disgrace to be seen in his company. For three or four years, the utmost efforts of his ingenuity could do no more than keep him out of jail. His legal services were in request — particularly his opinions in real estate cases, and he earned considerable sums; but his debts were so numerous and so enormous, that merely to defeat the attempts of creditors to confine his person, absorbed his income and tasked his powers. Many times he was kept out of the dreaded "limits" by some wealthy friend giving bail for his appearance. It was a life-long battle. The greater debts were never paid. Even the sum due to the Duc de Bassano is ordered, in his

last will, *to be* paid if he should die possessed of property sufficient for the purpose.

The details of this too unequal strife need not be dwelt upon. It formed the business and shifting basis of his life. Wearied, at length, with the endeavor to accomplish the impossible task, it is not to be denied, that, with advancing age and decaying powers, he grew indifferent to it, and often gave away in charity sums of money that might have appeased a creditor. This was wrong, of course, but the demands upon his charity were very numerous and pressing, and some of them were of the nature of debt itself. For example, Colonel Burr, upon his return to New York, found Luther Martin a ruined man — ruined through high living and deep drinking. He owed Luther Martin much money for his legal services, and more gratitude for his generous championship; and he paid both debts by taking him into his house, assigning him a permanent apartment, and maintaining him in comfort and dignity, until he died in 1826 at the age of eighty-one. Another example was that of a relative of Dr. Hosack, who fell into drinking and destitution in his old age, to whom Colonel Burr gave aid and shelter.

One day, when some dastard soul rebuked him for aiding men who had disgraced themselves by bad habits, he made this reply: "They may be black to the world. I care not how black. They were ever white to me!"

The only important act of Burr's later life was his suggestion of a course of political action which resulted, finally, in ending the supremacy of the Virginia politicians and electing General Jackson to the presidency. He knew all political secrets, as before, and had much more to do with advising political measures than would now be willingly confessed by certain politicians of that day who still linger on the stage. In the fall of 1815, he ascertained that James Monroe would be nominated for the presidency by the democratic congressional caucus. He was opposed to the system of nominating candidates by congressional caucuses, as being "hostile to all freedom and independence of suffrage;" he was opposed to Virginian supremacy; he was opposed to James Monroe. "A

certain junto," he wrote to Governor Alston, "of actual and factitious Virginians, having had possession of the government for twenty-four years, consider the United States as their property, and, by bawling 'Support the administration,' have so long succeeded in duping the republican public." In the same letter he drew a very unflattering sketch of Colonel Monroe: "Naturally dull and stupid; extremely illiterate; indecisive to a degree that would be incredible to one who did not know him; pusillanimous, and, of course, hypocritical; has no opinion on any subject, and will be always under the government of the worst men; pretends, as I am told, to some knowledge of military matters, but never commanded a platoon, nor was ever fit to command one. '*He served in the revolutionary war!*' — that is, he acted a short time as aid-de-camp to Lord Stirling, who was regularly * * *. Monroe's whole duty was to fill his lordship's tankard, and hear, with indications of admiration, his lordship's long stories about himself. Such is Monroe's military experience. I was with my regiment in the same division at the time. As a lawyer, Monroe was far below mediocrity. He never rose to the honor of trying a cause of the value of a hundred pounds. This is a character exactly suited to the views of the Virginia junto."

The remedy he proposed was the nomination of a popular character like Andrew Jackson, the hero of the late war, and then in the flush of his boundless popularity. "The moment," continued Burr, "is auspicious for breaking down this degrading system. The best citizens of our country acknowledge the feebleness of our administration. They acknowledge that offices are bestowed merely to preserve power, and without the smallest regard to fitness. If, then, there be a man in the United States of firmness and decision, and having standing enough to afford even a hope of success, it is your duty to hold him up to public view: that man is *Andrew Jackson.* Nothing is wanting but a respectable nomination, made before the proclamation of the Virginia caucus, and *Jackson's* success is inevitable. If this project should accord with your views, I could wish to see *you* prominent in the execution of

it. It must be known to be *your* work. Whether a formal and open nomination should now be made, or whether you should, for the present, content yourself with barely denouncing, by a joint resolution of both Houses of your legislature, congressional caucuses and nominations, you only can judge. One consideration inclines me to hesitate about the policy of a present nomination. It is this — that Jackson ought first to be admonished to be passive: for, the moment he shall be announced as a candidate, he will be assailed by the Virginia junto with menaces, and with insidious promises of boons and favors. *There is danger that Jackson might be wrought upon by such practices.*"

From that time General Jackson, as every one knows, was the popular candidate, *par excellence*, with ever-improving chances of success; until, in 1828, Colonel Burr saw his suggestion realized, and his old confederate and champion seated in the presidential chair. *Then*, the old soldier was in a position to aid, in another manner, the subjugation of the Spaniards in Texas! *Then*, he could give effect to the bent toward south-western acquisition which he had derived from Aaron Burr thirty years before!

The absorbing occupation of Burr's life for several years after his return from Europe, was the suit in chancery, well known to lawyers as the *Medcef Eden* case. His management of this cause was so remarkable and characteristic, that an outline of its history may interest the reader. Medcef Eden was a New York brewer who made a great fortune, and, dying in 1798, left his two sons a large amount of real estate upon the island of Manhattan. The two sons were to share the property equally, and if either died childless the survivor was to inherit the deceased's share. These young men, partly through their own extravagance, but chiefly through the dishonest sharpness of creditors, ran through their property in two or three years, and becoming bankrupts, were reduced to utter poverty. Their case was submitted afterward to the two leaders of the New York bar, Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr, and the question was proposed, whether the estate could be recovered. Hamilton said it

could not; Burr was of opinion that it could. Hamilton's opinion was adopted: no proceedings were attempted; the matter was forgotten; and the Edens lived on in poverty. A year after Burr's return, he was reminded of the case by hearing of the death of one of the brothers. Meanwhile, the estate had enormously increased in value. Inquiring for the surviving brother, he found him in Westchester county, immersed in debt, and residing within debtors' "limits." The result was, that Burr, moneyless and in debt as he was, undertook to recover the estate, Eden agreeing to follow his advice in all things — to be, in fact, a passive instrument in his hands. Eden, his wife and two daughters, Burr brought to the city, established them in his own house, sent the daughters to school, and amused his leisure hours, for ten years, by laboring with the same assiduity for their mental improvement as he had done in former times for Theodosia's.

He went to work craftily. The valuable parts of the estate lay in the city itself, several lots being held by banks and other wealthy corporations. He let those alone, for a while, and confined his first efforts to the recovery of a small farm in the upper part of the island, his object being to get the *principle* quietly established, upon which to found the more important suits. The owner of the farm was informed of this intention, and it was further intimated to him, that if he would not too seriously contest and prolong the suit, he should be allowed to buy back his farm on his own terms. Burr won the suit. The case was appealed. He was again successful. Then he came down upon the holders of the city lots with a pelting storm of writs of ejectment — to their equal surprise and alarm. The litigation was then fairly begun, and the courts were kept busy at it for many years — until it became as familiar as the cause of "Jarndice and Jarndice." Among those who assisted Burr in the conduct of these suits was Martin Van Buren. Burr won suit after suit, and recovered, in time, a very large amount of property.

But, unfortunately, he began the war destitute of its "sinews," though his opponents were bountifully provided with the same. The suits were long, and some of them very expensive.

On the faith of the first decisions in his favor, he induced money-lenders, by the payment of excessive usury, to advance money upon property still in dispute, and thus it sometimes happened that neither he nor his client gained any pecuniary advantage from decisions which assigned them valuable houses and lands. Nevertheless, he gained enough to amply repay him for his trouble and toil, and his client was maintained with every comfort until he died, leaving Burr the guardian of his children. The daughters, it may be added, became accomplished women, and contracted respectable marriages.

One case, in which Burr was the leader, would furnish the groundwork of a thrilling romance. A brother and sister, the children of an ancient house in England, were led, by an extraordinary chain of circumstances, to suppose that they were not related, but were brought up as brother and sister to prevent their forming a tenderer relation. They fell in love, eloped, married, and fled to America. Hither their guardian followed them, and, the better to secure their separation, had them arrested on the charge of incest, and thrown into prison. In the old stone jail that formerly stood in the Park, between the City Hall and Broadway, Burr found the deluded pair and their daughter, a child of strange beauty. They protested their innocence and implored his aid. Entering warmly into the cause, he soon obtained the release of the beautiful unhappy mother, and her wonderfully lovely child. He gave them a home in his own house. The child grew to the age of three or four, when, fortunately for itself and its parents, it died. After a long confinement, the husband-brother was released in consequence of the death of the guardian who brought the suit. Both being then convinced of their error, the lady went to reside in Paris, and the gentleman returned to England, where he still resides. All this was done by Colonel Burr without fee or reward, for his clients were then destitute of resources; but, in after years, when he was a very old man, the gentleman, who had inherited a large fortune, sent him a considerable, though inadequate, fee.

A beautiful woman came to him one day to engage his services in a suit for divorce, which she was about to bring against

her husband. After hearing her story, he was averse to bringing the suit, and dissuaded her in terms like these: "Madame, your cause will have to be tried by twelve *men* — all sinners. They will have a fellow-feeling with the sinner; and, you know, a fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind. These men will have to be told, that for a long time past your husband has not been permitted to enjoy your society. They will *see* you and pity *him!* I assure you, my dear madame, it will be extremely difficult to get a verdict in your favor." The lady was convinced.

As a general rule, he was treated by the bar with distant respect. He was an antagonist to be afraid of. On one occasion, a lawyer of some note refused to be employed in an important cause in conjunction with Colonel Burr. The company who brought the suit deliberated awhile, and determined to adhere to Burr, to whom the papers were then confided. It was known to be his custom never to undertake a cause which he was not sure of winning, and it was known, too, that he had never lost a cause in his life which he had attended to himself. The opposing party waited with anxiety to hear whether Burr had accepted the case, and, on learning that he had, made an immediate offer to compromise.

Mr. Epes Sargent, in his ("campaign") Life of the great Kentuckian, tells us, that on his return from Ghent, Henry Clay visited the federal court-room in the city of New York. "On entering the court-room in the City Hall," says Mr. Sargent, "the eyes of the bench, bar, officers, and attendants upon the court, were turned upon Mr. Clay, who was invited to take a seat upon the bench, which he politely declined, and took a position in the bar. Shortly after, a small gentleman, apparently advanced in years, and with bushy, gray hair, whom Mr. Clay, for an instant, did not recognize, approached him. He quickly perceived it was Colonel Burr, who tendered his hand to salute Mr. Clay. The latter declined receiving it. The colonel, nevertheless, was not repulsed, but engaged in conversation with Mr. Clay, remarking, that he had understood, that besides the treaty of peace, the American commissioners had negotiated a good commercial convention with Great Brit-

ain. Mr. Clay replied coldly, that such a convention was concluded, and that its terms would be known as soon as it was promulgated by public authority. Colonel Burr expressed a wish to have an hour's interview with him, and Mr. Clay told him where he stopped — but the colonel never called."

These were busy years, as indeed were all the years of this man's life. A gentleman who spent some time in his office at this period, has described to me his manner of employing the day. He rose at the dawn. A breakfast of an egg and a cup of coffee sufficed for this most abstemious of men; after which he worked among his papers for some hours before his clerks and assistants arrived. He was a hard taskmaster: he "kept us all upon the jump." All day he was dispatching and receiving messages, sending for books, persons, and papers; expecting every command to be obeyed with next-to-impossible celerity, inspiring every one with his own zeal, and getting a surprising quantity of work accomplished. "He was *business incarnate*," said my informant. About ten in the evening he would give over, invite his companions to the side-board, and take a single glass of wine. Then his spirits would rise, and he would sit for hours telling stories of his past life, and drawing brief and graphic sketches of celebrated characters with whom he had acted. Often he was full of wit and gayety at such times; "the liveliest fellow in the world;" "as merry as a boy;" "never melancholy, never ill-natured." About midnight, or later, he would lie down upon a hard couch in a corner of his office, and sleep "like a child," until the morning. In his personal habits he was a thorough-going Spartan — eating little, drinking little, sleeping little, working hard. He was fond of calculating upon how small a sum life could be supported, and used to think that he could live well enough upon seventy-five cents a week.

And here may be introduced such fragments of his conversation as are still remembered.

His conversation upon the past was remarkable for its candor, humor, and charity. He denounced no one — not even General Wilkinson, of whom he spoke more severely than of any one else. He used to assert, in the most positive manner,

that Wilkinson had unequivocally *betrayed* him. Against Jefferson he did not seem to be embittered, though the publication of the "Anas" gave him a passing disgust. He described him as a very agreeable man in conversation; a man of no "presence;" a plain, country-looking man; a sincere and thorough "Jacobin" in opinion. He thought Jefferson's "leveling principles," as he called them, were very absurd, and had done great harm. Of the republican form of government, as here established, with its entirely fatal element of "rotation in office," he had an ill opinion, and was sure it could not last. One day, some gentlemen were conversing upon the subject in his presence, when one of them chanced to use the phrase, "expounders of the Constitution." At the moment a noisy crowd of electioneering Democrats were passing. Burr, who had stood silent for some time with his hands behind him, holding his hat (his favorite attitude), pointed to the mob, and said, "*They* are the expounders of the Constitution!"

General Washington he underrated to the last. Himself the quickest of mortals in apprehending and deciding, he could not admire a general who was so slow to make up his mind. He thought Washington, as before recorded, a very honest and well-intentioned country gentleman; but no great soldier, and very far indeed from being a demi-god. Burr disliked a dull person next to a coward, and he thought general Washington a dull person. Hamilton and other young scholar-soldiers of the Revolution were evidently of a similar opinion, but Hamilton thought that the popularity of the general was essential to the triumph of the cause, and, accordingly, he kept his opinion to himself. Burr, less prudent, less disinterested, perhaps, made no secret of his.

Carlyle declares, that the very stupidity of John Bull is wiser than other people's wisdom; and it may be remarked of General Washington, that, though he could not make a *bon mot*, nor always spell one when it was made, his dullness was brighter than the brilliancy of Hamilton and Burr. Let Burr, however, be commended for his candor in not *affecting* an admiration for a popular idol, with regard to whom it is

considered unpatriotic to have an opinion. His harmless criticism of his commander is less offensive and less *immoral* than the canting adulation of self-seeking politicians, who have succeeded in concealing the interesting traits of the man, and obscuring his real claim to the admiration of posterity.

People were often startled by the utter *nonchalance* with which Colonel Burr would allude to passages in his past life, which were generally thought to be infamous. The following scene, derived from an eye-witness, is an example:

It has been mentioned that on the opening of the trial at Richmond, young Winfield Scott occupied a conspicuous position above the audience. Before the trial had progressed far, he left Richmond, and never saw Colonel Burr again until after his return from Europe. On the evening of the day on which he was first named *General* Scott, he found himself at the house of a distinguished politician in Albany, where a little supper was to celebrate his promotion.

"Have you any objection, general, to be introduced to Colonel Aaron Burr?" inquired the giver of the feast.

"Any gentleman whom you choose to invite to your house," replied the general, "I shall be glad to know."

Colonel Burr entered; the introduction took place; the party sat down to whist, until supper was announced. At the table, the old colonel and the young general sat opposite each other, but no particular conversation occurred between them for some time. Meanwhile, General Scott, ever as courteous as brave, forbore to pronounce the word *Richmond*, or even *Virginia*, lest it should excite painful feelings in the mind of a fallen man. Suddenly, Colonel Burr looked up and said,

"General Scott, I've seen you before."

"Have you, indeed?" rejoined the general, supposing that he referred to some military scene, or other public occasion, in which he had figured.

"Yes," continued Burr, "*I saw you at my trial*"

He then described the position and dress of the young gentleman in the court-room, and proceeded to converse about the scenes that transpired at Richmond precisely in the tone and manner of a casual spectator. The general was both

astonished and relieved. It was during the war of 1812 that this scene occurred, and the old soldier expressed cordial admiration of General Scott's gallantry and conduct. On the same occasion, Colonel Burr asked,

"Why don't the folks at Washington employ General Jackson?"

Some one said that Jackson had a command in the militia, and would soon be called into active service.

Burr said: "I'll tell you why they don't give him a commission; he's a friend of mine; that's the reason."

He talked with perfect freedom respecting his Mexican enterprise, particularly its comic incidents. Commenting on the charge that he had descended the river "in warlike array," he used to give a humorous description of his boats and their crews. Nothing is accurately enough remembered of his description to be given here, except that the manner of the descent was most ludicrously different from what is understood by the phrase "warlike array." What with the pranks of a large monkey and the music of a violin, his men seemed to have had a very merry voyage of it. He spoke kindly of Blennerhassett. He was not a bad man, Burr would say, though a weak one; a man of some knowledge, and no sense; who required no *persuading* to enter into the South-western scheme, but was madly eager to embark in it the moment it was mentioned. After Burr's return to America, he wrote to Mrs. Blennerhassett (in Ireland) for the letters and documents in her possession relating to the enterprise. She demanded a great price for them, which Burr was not in circumstances to give. He sent her two or three sums of money, however, in her destitution, the amounts of which are not remembered by my informant, though he is positive as to the fact of money being sent to her.

He conversed with equal freedom of the duel with Hamilton. He never blamed himself for his conduct in that affair Despising the out-cry made about the duel, he would indulge, sometimes, in a kind of defiant affectation respecting it. "*My friend Hamilton—whom I shot*," he would say, with amazing nonchalance. Usually, however, he alluded to his antagonist

with respect, styling him "General Hamilton," and doing partial justice to his merits. "Was Hamilton a gentleman?" asked a foreigner once in Burr's hearing. Burr resented the question, and replied with hauteur: "Sir, *I* met him."

He told an anecdote relating to the duel, of which the following is the purport. On a journey, while stopping at a tavern to bait his horses, he strolled into the village, and saw a traveling exhibition of wax-works. To amuse an idle moment, he entered. Among the figures were two representing Hamilton and himself in the act of firing. The figures were vilely executed, and the exhibition was made the more ridiculous by some doggerel which the ambitious exhibitor had scrawled underneath. With some difficulty he made it out, as follows:

> "O Burr, O Burr, what hast thou done?
> Thou hast shooted dead great Hamilton.
> You hid behind a bunch of thistle,
> And shooted him dead with a great hoss pistol."

He told this story just as any one would have told it, and laughed at the lines as heartily as any of his auditors.

He was surprised, one day, to receive the following epistle, which is here transcribed from the original: "Aaron Burr: Sir, Please to meet me with the weapon you chuse on the 15 of may where you murdered my father at 1 o'clock with your second. 8 May 1819. J. A. Hamilton." To which he wrote a reply like this: "Boy, I never injured you: nor wished to injure your father. A. Burr." On reflection, however, he thought it best not to notice the communication, and tore up his reply. He was afterward informed that the letter was a forgery.

There was one remarkable occasion on which he spoke of the duel seriously and eloquently. It was when, for the only time in his life, he revisited the ground where it was fought. He went there to oblige a young friend, who wished to see a spot so famous. Leaving their boat at the foot of the heights of Weehawken, just where Burr had left his boat on that fatal morning a quarter of a century before, they climbed over the same rocks, and soon reached the ground. Except that the

rocks were covered with names, and that the ground was more overgrown with trees, the place had not changed in all those years: nor has it yet. It had changed owners, however, and belonged to a son* of Rufus King, Burr's colleague in the Senate, and Hamilton's friend and ally. In the boat Burr had been somewhat thoughtful and silent, but seemed to enjoy the bright day and pleasant shores, as he always enjoyed bright and pleasant things. On reaching the scene, he placed his companion on the spot where Hamilton had stood, and went to the place where he had stood himself, and proceeded to narrate the incidents of the occasion.

The conversation turned to the causes of the duel. As he talked, the old fire seemed to be rekindled within him; his eye blazed; his voice rose. He recounted the long catalogue of wrongs he had received from Hamilton, and told how he had forborne and forborne, and forgiven and forgiven, and even stooped to remonstrate — until he had no choice except to slink out of sight a wretch degraded and despised, or meet the calumniator on the field and silence him. He dwelt much on the meanness of Hamilton. He charged him with being malevolent and cowardly — a man who would slander a rival, and not stand to it unless he was cornered. "When he stood up to fire," said Burr, "he caught my eye, and quailed under it; he looked like a convicted felon." It was not true, he continued, that Hamilton did not fire at him; Hamilton fired *first*;† he heard the ball whistle among the branches, and saw the severed twig above his head. He spoke of what Hamilton wrote on the evening before the duel with infinite contempt. "It reads," said he, "like the confessions of a penitent monk." These isolated expressions, my informant says, convey no idea whatever of the fiery impressiveness with which he spoke. He justified all he had done; nay, applauded it.

He was moved to the depths of his soul: the pent-up feelings of twenty-five years burst into speech. His companion, who had known him intimately many years, and had never

* James G. King, for many years a great New York banker.

† Burr's second asserted the same thing, and maintained it to the last.

seen him roused before, was almost awe-struck at this strange outburst of emotion, and the startling force of many of his expressions. He remembers wondering that he should ever have thought Burr small of stature, for, during this scene, the loftiness of his demeanor was such, that his very form seemed to rise and expand. It was long before he regained his usual composure. All the way home he still spoke of the olden time, and seemed to renew his youth, and live over again his former life.

While upon this subject, I may introduce a specimen-falsehood which has had currency, and is actually narrated in a recent volume purporting to be a Life of Alexander Hamilton. "Only once, during the progress of Mrs. Hamilton's life," says the work referred to, "was she afflicted with the sight of her husband's murderer. In the year 1822 she was traveling from New York to Albany on one of the boats on the Hudson river. The company had been summoned to dinner. When Mrs. Hamilton had almost reached her seat in the dining-saloon, on raising her eyes she perceived Aaron Burr standing directly opposite to her, with the narrow width of the table alone between them. The shock was too much for her system, she uttered a loud scream, fell, and was carried in a fainting state from the apartment. As soon as she recovered, she insisted on being set on shore at the first landing-place. She refused to journey further on a vessel which contained the detested form of Aaron Burr. It is said that after the removal of Mrs. Hamilton from the dining-saloon, Burr deliberately sat down and ate a hearty dinner with the utmost composure."

The gentleman is still living, a well-known member of the New York bar, and a gentleman of unquestionable veracity, who was Burr's companion on the only occasion on which he and Mrs. Hamilton were ever together on board a steamboat. He informs me — which of course is evident enough — that this fine story is false in every particular. It was a small steamboat plying between New York and Manhattanville, on which the awkward rencontre occurred. Mrs. Hamilton merely looked at Burr, as every body else looked at him; for he never went anywhere without being an object of universal attention

Nothing unusual took place! All the passengers landed together at Manhattanville, and there was never any dinner eaten by passengers on board the boat. The universally-known fact that Mrs. Hamilton was not a fool, would of itself refute the story, one would think. Yet we find it printed and reprinted. It is a *fair* specimen of the stories told to the injury of Burr's reputation. Not one in ten is truer. It got into the papers in Burr's life-time, and he frequently referred to it, in illustrating his favorite topics — the deceptiveness of probabilities, and the inevitable falseness of the thing commonly called History.

Another story he used to tell in the same connection. The belief that he was the "deadest of dead shots," was universal throughout the country; whereas the fact was that he had had very little practice in all his life, and was only tolerably skilled in the use of the weapon. Phrenologists and sportsmen tell us that some men are good shots by nature. Burr was one of these; and the steadiness of his nerves gave him an advantage. But to the story. He was at Utica, attending the session of a court, at which there was a great concourse of lawyers. One afternoon, after the court had adjourned, a number of the younger members of the bar went into a field behind the court-house to fire pistols at a mark. After firing awhile, seeing Colonel Burr pass by, they invited him to join in the sport, all of them being extremely anxious to witness an exhibition of his renowned ability. He protested his want of skill, and begged off: but as they were very urgent, he at last consented. A pistol was handed him, where he stood, and, looking around for a mark, he said "There is a white knot in that post yonder; shall I fire at that?" It was about sixteen paces distant. He raised his pistol, took careful aim, and fired. The ball struck the exact center of the knot. It was a wonderful hit, and astonished no one so much as the individual who achieved it. He was urged to fire again, but having no wish to tarnish his easily-won honors, he retired from the field. On his way back through the wilderness to Albany, he stopped in a lonely place to water his horse, when the thought occurred to him to try what he could really do

with a pistol. He fired several shots. "I couldn't hit a barn-door," he would say; "but was there a man that saw me make that hit at Utica who could be persuaded that A. B. was not a dead shot?"

Other instances he gave from his own experience, in which he had been thought a necromancer, or possessed of a devil, merely from some accidental conjunction of circumstances, or by the use of means the most ordinary and obvious.

The interest which Colonel Burr took in the education of youth has been before alluded to. He always had a protégé in training, upon whose culture he bestowed unwearied pains and more money than he could always afford. The story of Vanderlyn, the most distinguished protégé he ever had, was one which was often related in these later years.

He was riding along in a curricle and pair, one day during his senatorial term, when one of his horses lost a shoe; and he stopped at the next blacksmith's to have it replaced. It was a lonely country place, not far from Kingston, in Ulster county, New York. He strolled about while the blacksmith was at work, and, returning, saw upon the side of a stable near by, a charcoal drawing of his own curricle and horses. The picture, which must have been executed in a very few minutes, was wonderfully accurate and spirited, and he stood admiring it for some time. Turning round, he noticed a boy a little way off, dressed in coarse homespun.

"Who did that?" inquired Burr, pointing to the picture.

"I did it," said the boy.

The astonished traveler entered into conversation with the lad, found him intelligent, though ignorant, learned that he was born in the neighborhood, had had no instruction in drawing, and was engaged to work for the blacksmith six months. Burr wrote a few words on a piece of paper, and said, as he wrote:

"My boy, you are too smart a fellow to stay here all your life. If ever you should want to change your employment and see the world, just put a clean shirt into your pocket, go to New York, and go straight to that address," handing the boy the paper.

He then mounted his curricle and was out of sight in a moment. Several months passed away, and the circumstance had nearly faded from the busy senator's recollection. As he was sitting at breakfast one morning, at Richmond Hill, a servant put into his hand a small paper parcel, saying that it was brought by a boy who was waiting outside. Burr opened the parcel, and found a coarse, country-made *clean shirt.* Supposing it to be a mistake, he ordered the boy to be shown in. Who should enter but the Genius of the Roadside, who placed in Burr's hand the identical piece of paper he had given him. The lad was warmly welcomed. Burr took him into his family, educated him, and procured him instruction in the art which nature had indicated should be the occupation of his life-time. Afterward, Burr assisted him to Europe, where he spent five years in the study of painting, and became an artist worthy of the name.

While Burr himself was wandering in Europe, Vanderlyn was exhibiting pictures in the Louvre, at Paris, and receiving from Napoleon a gold medal, besides compliments and felicitations from the emperor's own lips. Vanderlyn did all he could for his benefactor in Paris; but unhappily he had the successful artist's usual fortune — poverty embittered by glory. He afterward had commissions from Congress, and painted the well-known "Landing of Columbus" for a panel in the rotunda of the Capitol at Washington. He also painted the portraits of Colonel Burr and Theodosia from which the engravings were taken by which their lineaments are now known to the public. Vanderlyn died only five years ago at Kingston, near the spot where he drew the charcoal sketch which decided his career.

Burr was fond of children to weakness. In walking about the Battery or the Park, which in those days used to swarm with nurses and children, he would often stop to speak to a pretty child. He has frequently emptied his pockets of all the change he had in giving pieces of money to the children and their attendants. In his office, he made a point of always keeping a supply of small coins expressly for children. A lady tells me that she has known him to send out a ten dollar

bill and get it all changed into five, six, ten, and twelve cent pieces, in order that he might be sure to have one to give her every time she said her lesson with the required degree of accuracy. Particularly fond of educating girls, he was far in advance of his time in the liberality of his ideas on that subject. His maxim was, that the aptitudes given by nature to each child should be cultivated without regard to sex. Accordingly, he had one of his female protégés, who exhibited a talent for music, taught the violin, both because it is the most perfect of instruments, and because the girl showed a remarkable fondness for it. Another girl acquired under his teaching a sufficient knowledge of Greek to read the New Testament in that language with some fluency.

Yet it appears he had a horror of hearing women talk upon politics, and would never permit the topic to be introduced in their presence, if he could prevent it.

"That man," said he one day of a stranger who had just left the room, "is no gentleman."

"Why not?" exclaimed the ladies in a chorus.

"Because he introduced politics before ladies," answered Burr.

"But, colonel, have ladies no sense, then?" inquired one of them.

With a smile, he said in his soft whispering way, "*All* sense, madame; yet it is better to talk sweet little nothings to them."

His female protégés usually became agreeable and estimable women, and did well in life. The young men whom he educated were too apt to copy his faults, instead of his virtues; particularly his worst fault, which was a reckless generosity in the use of money. Some of them passed their lives in pecuniary difficulties, which a little self-denying prudence in the beginning of their career might have enabled them to avoid. Others, however, escaped those degrading miseries, and are at this moment prosperous gentlemen. One of these I addressed in the following manner:

"You were intimately associated with Colonel Burr during the years when your character was forming, and he must hav

influenced you powerfully. Looking back a quarter of a century, do you think he influenced you beneficially?"

"I am sure he did," was the reply.

"What particular effect did his character produce upon yours?" I asked.

The emphatic reply was: "*He made me iron!*"

A lady said to me: "I never ask and never answer an impertinent question; I was brought up in the *Burr school.*"

There are some pleasant recollections of Colonel Burr recorded in a recent work, entitled "The Autobiography of a Blind Minister," by the Rev. Timothy Woodbridge, D. D., a grandson of Jonathan Edwards, and one of Burr's cousins. "In the summer of 1819," says Dr. Woodbridge, "I met my cousin Aaron Burr, at the house of our common uncle, Hon. Timothy Edwards, in Stockbridge. This was the first time he had visited our uncle, for whom he had a profound reverence, since his return from Europe.

"Burr is a conspicuous character in American history; and, as I felt the most intense curiosity to make his acquaintance, and study his mind, I had several interviews with him during this visit of two or three days. His conversation was instructive and fascinating, and, joined to his bearing, conveyed to my mind the impression that he was made by the God of Nature to put forth a commanding agency in human affairs. His language was clear as light. His conversation was sententious and condensed, and I never knew a man convey as much meaning in as few words. I heard him sketch the character of a number of our revolutionary patriots and heroes in a wonderfully graphic manner, and I thought him a great moral painter.

"My uncle told me that, after Burr came home from his Canadian campaign, he described to him the character of Benedict Arnold. 'Arnold,' said Burr, 'is a perfect madman in the excitement of battle, and is ready for any deeds of valor; but he has not a particle of moral courage. He is utterly unprincipled, and has no love of country or self-respect, to guide him. He is not to be trusted anywhere but under the eye of a superior officer.'

"The day after Burr left our uncle's I called at the house, to talk over the impressions of this unwonted visit. My aunt was a venerable and pious woman. 'I want to tell you, cousin,' said she, 'the scene I passed through this morning. When Colonel Burr's carriage had driven up to the door, I asked him to go with me into the north room, and I can not tell you how anxious I felt, as I, an old woman, went through the hall with that great man, Colonel Burr, to admonish him, and to lead him to repentance. After we were by ourselves, I said to him, "Colonel Burr, I have a thousand tender memories associated with you. I took care of you in your childhood, and I feel the deepest concern over your erring steps. You have committed a great many sins against God, and you killed that great and good man, General Hamilton. I beseech you to repent, and fly to the blood and righteousness of the Redeemer for pardon. I can not bear to think of your being lost, and I often pray most earnestly for your salvation." The only reply he made to me,' continued the excellent old lady, 'was, "O, aunt, don't feel so badly; we shall both meet in heaven yet; meanwhile, may God bless you." He then tenderly took my hand, and left the house.'"

He often received, in the course of his life, similar well-meant admonitions, and invariably replied to them with thankfulness and respect. Letters, anonymous and other, reminding him of his mother's dying wishes respecting him, and urging him to repent, were found among his papers. One of these, written by a lady who had known and loved his mother, was eloquent and touching. She inclosed a fragment of a letter which she had received from his mother *sixty* years before, in which the most ardent desires were expressed for the spiritual welfare of her infant son. "I have often reflected," continued the lady, "on your trials, and the fortitude with which you have sustained them, with astonishment. Yours has been no common lot. But you seem to have forgotten the right use of adversity. Afflictions from heaven 'are angels sent on embassies of love.' We must improve, and not abuse them, to obtain the blessing. They are commissioned to stem the tide of impetuous passion; to check inordinate ambition; to

show us the insignificance of earthly greatness; to wean our affections from transitory things, and elevate them to those realities which are ever blooming at the right hand of God. When affliction is thus sanctified, 'the heart at once it humbles and exalts.'

"Was it philosophy that supported you in your trials? There is an hour approaching when philosophy will fail, and all human science will desert you. What then will be your substitute? Tell me, Colonel Burr, or rather answer it to your own heart, when the pale messenger appears, how will you meet him — 'undamped by doubts, undarkened by despair?'

"The inclosed is calculated to excite mingled sensations both of a melancholy and pleasing nature. The hand that penned it is now among 'the just made perfect.' Your mother had given you up by faith. Have you ever ratified the vows she made in your behalf? When she bade you a long farewell, she commended you to the protection of Him who had promised to be a Father to the fatherless.

"The great Augustine, in his early years, was an infidel in his principles, and a libertine in his conduct, which his pious mother deplored with bitter weeping. But she was told by her friends that 'the child of so many prayers and tears could not be lost;' and it was verified to her happy experience, for he afterward became one of the grand luminaries of the church of Christ. This remark has often been applied to you; and I trust you will yet have the happiness to find that 'the prayers of the righteous' have 'availed much.'"

Burr was no scoffer. He was desirous, while condemning the severe theology of his fathers, not to be thought an unbeliever. A lady informs me that if he chanced to enter a room while she was hearing her children say their prayers, he would stand silent in an attitude of reverence till the exercise was done. He occasionally went, with a lady, to the Episcopal church, and would have gone oftener but for his impatience of a dull or denunciatory sermon. As he was coming out of St John's one fine Sunday afternoon, his companion asked him what he thought of the sermon, which had borne hard upon

erring mortals. "I think," said he, "that God is a great deal better than people suppose. I, at least, am a believer in his goodness. I say with Pope:

> "'Submit; in this or any other sphere,
> Secure to be as blessed as thou canst bear:
> Safe in the hand of one disposing Power,
> Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.'"

He thought the Bible to be by far the most valuable of books, and admired the Psalms of David particularly. On being asked to name his favorite authors in the order in which he esteemed them, he replied: "The Bible, of course, it is *the* Book; after that, Shakespeare, Burns, Pope. He had little relish, in his later years, for the French authors who had pleased him so much in his youth. He used to say of Rousseau that he was well named "a self-torturing egotist." He also outgrew any fondness he may have had for Voltaire. Of his ancestor, Jonathan Edwards, he used often to say that he "was the clearest head of America. How the race has de generated," he would say, with a humorous shrug.

As the years passed, his reputation was more and more blackened by the idle, calumnious tales that were circulated respecting him. He bore it with surprising equanimity. Knowing well the utter hopelessness of attempting to restore his good name, he submitted to the wrong in silence, and grew at last almost indifferent to it. For many years, indeed, he cherished the hope that the publication of his story, after his death, would set all right at last, and to secure this was one of his latest cares. But for his own life-time he knew the case was hopeless.

"I don't care *what* they say of me," he said to one who showed him a scurrilous paragraph; "they may say whatever they please; I let them alone, I only ask to be let alone."

On a similar occasion, a lady said to him, "Why, colonel, if they were to accuse you of murder, I don't think you'd deny it."

He replied, "O, no, my child, why should I? What good would it do? Every man likes his own opinion best. He may

not have a hundred thousand dollars, but he has his opinion. A man's opinion is his pride, his wealth, himself. As far as I am concerned, they may indulge in any opinion they choose."

One day in his office, a gentleman talked in the usual half-true manner of the evils of war. Burr remarked,

"Slander has slain more than the sword."

To a friend who censured him for allowing so many hundreds of injurious paragraphs to circulate without contradiction, he replied that he had formerly supposed that his character was strong enough to bear such petty assaults, and he had felt himself safe in treating them with contempt. "But," he added, "I fear I have committed a great error; the men who knew their falsity are mostly dead, and the generation who now read them may take them for truths, being uncontradicted. I admit I have committed a capital error, but it is too late to repair it."

"Poor Burr!" exclaimed the recorder of the remark last quoted, "he was a man of many griefs; but he was a child of genius — a brave, intellectual, brilliant man — and had within himself many of the noblest qualities which adorn his species. But he had his weaknesses, and his petty vices in addition. Who has not? He was the victim of a combination of circumstances, rather than of his own fault."

Occasionally, Burr's revilers would receive a telling rebuke. One of his English friends, a colonel in the British army, came to this country with his wife and daughters, and hastened to renew his acquaintance with Colonel Burr. A few days after his arrival, some officious individuals to whom he had brought letters, and who had seen Burr walking in the street with him and his party, felt themselves called upon to put the stranger on his guard.

"Really, Colonel ——, you mustn't know Burr," said one of these friendly provincials. "No one in society thinks of knowing Burr; he is held in a kind of abhorrence. I wouldn't for the world have my wife and daughters seen speaking with him."

"Wouldn't you," said the jolly Briton; "for our part, we think Colonel Burr's acquaintance a privilege and an honor."

"But," said another of the officious ones, "Aaron Burr is the greatest villain on earth."

"Gentlemen," was the soldier's quiet reply, "we *like* villains," and turned on his heel.

Burr himself was provoked once to notice a public affront. It was at Jamaica, on Long Island, when he was a very old man, on one of the last occasions of his appearing in a court-room. The news of his coming preceded him, and such was the general desire to see so renowned a character, that the schools were dismissed, and people walked many miles to attend the court. A lawyer, fifty years his junior, thought to make capital for himself by roundly abusing Colonel Burr in his opening speech. On rising to reply, Colonel Burr, in his very blandest tones, said,

"I learned in the Revolution, in the society of gentlemen, and I have since observed for myself, that a man who is guilty of intentional bad manners, is capable of crime."

The remark is not a very striking one, but it is said to have produced a great effect upon the auditors, and to have completely quelled the young lawyer's insolence. The manner of the man must have been powerful in the extreme, for so many of his words to be remembered after the lapse of so many years.

One of Burr's law-partners relates an anecdote which also shows how his words cling to the memory of those who heard them. The circumstance occurred about forty-two years ago. A gentleman entered the office and brought the news that a friend of Colonel Burr's, who had at a critical period written a pamphlet in his vindication, had fallen dead in the street a few hours before.

"Do me the favor," said Burr, turning to his partner, "to send for a carriage; we must go and see how this is!"

On reaching the house, they found the family in great distress, and the sheriff in possession of the body for a debt of two hundred and fifty dollars.

Looking upon the face of the dead man, Burr said,

"This may be law, but it is not Christian charity!"

Turning to his partner, who was the cashier of the concern,

he added, "This must not go on. This man must be buried. You have the money of the privateersmen (clients) in your hands; pay the debt.

His prudent partner demurred, saying the money might be called for before they could replace it."

"Sir," replied Burr with decision, "that man once did me a kindness; give them the money and I will borrow as much to-morrow of the Black Prince."

The body was delivered, and both Burr and his partner attended the funeral. Black Prince was the nickname of one of Burr's staunch friends.

As he grew older, the habit of indiscriminate giving grew upon him to a most remarkable degree. During his more active years he usually had a partner who managed the financial affairs of the firm; for he was not fit himself to have the control of money, and he knew it. There were certain claims upon him which he could never resist. Old soldiers of the Revolution and their children, men who had lost by the failure of the expedition and their children, men who had stood by him to the last in his political career and their children, were the people who had but to apply to him for assistance, to get from him, if necessary, his last dollar. Literally, his last dollar; nay, his last cent; for he has been known to examine all his pockets and drawers, and bestow every coin he could find upon a needy friend.

When he received a sum of money of his own, he used to make a kind of well of books for its reception in the middle of his large, crowded table; and then lucky was the applicant who made the first claim upon it! He gave, and gave, and gave, until the well ran dry, and was filled in again with law papers and books; when, too often, a creditor would present himself, and go away again disappointed. "Burr was not a man," says one who knew more about his pecuniary affairs and habits than any body else, "to *worry* about a debt, though he liked to pay when he could." A creditor would say,

"This bill has been running a long time, colonel."

"It has indeed," he would reply.

"I should like to have the money," the creditor would continue.

"And I should like to pay you," the colonel would rejoin.

And if, when the applicant called again, there was money in the well, he *would* pay it with pleasure. Never was there a front door in New York so beset with solicitors for charity as his. To avoid the rush of suitors, he removed at one time to Jersey City, thinking that the obstacle of the river would, at least, diminish the crowd of applicants. He resided there for some years. These ceaseless gifts it was, that made him an extravagant man, and kept him poor. Upon himself he spent little. He lived chiefly upon fish, bread, weak coffee, claret and water, and other simple articles. He could scarcely have had a clerk whose personal expenses were so little as his own.

Heaps of miscellaneous pieces of paper from Burr's desks and drawers, have been offered to my inspection; they show how constantly he was solicited for pecuniary aid, and how frequently that aid was afforded. Notes payable to him that have never been paid; applications for small loans; acknowledgments of money borrowed; thanks for similar favors; fill up the interstices between larger documents. He *could* not say No, at last. He could scarcely choose *but* give.

An anecdote related to me by the wife of one of Burr's partners will serve to illustrate his *infirmity* with regard to the use of money. He may have been seventy-five years old when the circumstances took place. The lady chanced to be sitting in the office one morning, when Burr received a large amount of money in bills, and as his habits with regard to money had often been the subject of remark in the house, she watched his proceedings with curiosity. She saw him first take a law-book from an upper shelf, put a fifty dollar note between its leaves, and replace the book on the shelf. The rest of the money he deposited in the middle of his table, as usual. He had on that morning an extraordinary concourse of begging visitors, of whom no one seemed to go empty away, and by three o'clock in the afternoon the well was exhausted. An hour later, Colonel Burr looked at his watch,

sprang from his chair, and began hastily to pack his portmanteau with law-papers, in preparation for a journey to Albany, where he had business with the courts. When he was ready, he looked into his receptacle for money and *discovered* that it was empty. An examination of his pockets produced only a few coins.

"Bless me!" he exclaimed, "I have to go to Albany in half an hour, and have no money."

Could madame lend him ten dollars? Madame could not. Would madame oblige him by stepping over and asking her good mother to lend him the amount? Madame was of opinion that her good mother would not lend Colonel Burr any *more* money. He was at his wit's end. At length she said,

"But, colonel, what are you going to do with the fifty dollar bill in that book yonder?"

"O! I forgot," he said; "I put it there this morning on purpose. What a treasure you are to remind me of it!"

The year 1829 saw General Jackson President of the United States. He was not unmindful of his old friends of 1806. To Samuel Swartwout he gave the collectorship of New York. He could not do any thing openly for Colonel Burr, as his early connection with that terrible person had been one of the strong points made against him during the canvass. But he *did* grant him favors indirectly; he gave commissions and minor appointments to several of Burr's friends and protégés, at Burr's personal request. He also had a secret interview with Burr in New York when he made his first triumphal visit to the metropolis. At a later date, however, the general played his old confederate a sorry trick — as shall now be briefly related.

About the year 1828, an act of Congress was passed, providing for the relief and remuneration of certain revolutionary soldiers. Besides having received no pay for his services in the Revolution, Colonel Burr had expended considerable sums in aid of the cause, and, in fact, through his connection with the army, had lost the greater part of his inheritance. His accounts had never been settled. Old age was now upon him. He had a revolutionary pension of six hundred dollars a year,

and two annuities, yielding about fifteen hundred more; but with his habits and debts, this income was insufficient, and he had a dread of being a *poor* old man. He therefore prepared a statement of his expenditures during the Revolution, and made a claim, under the new act, for the sum, with interest, the amount being nearly one hundred thousand dollars. Before proceeding, he submitted his case to two or three of the first lawyers of New York and New Jersey, who pronounced his claim just, and within the provisions of the act. To make assurance doubly sure, he intrusted the business to a special agent, a gentleman who had studied law in his office, who spent some months in Washington urging the claim. From this gentleman I obtained the story.

The papers were duly presented to the Secretary, who soon rejected the claim on the ground that the applicant had not served to the end of the war, as the act required. Not disheartened, he asked time to show that, though he had resigned before the end of the war, yet he had done service, at General Washington's request, after his resignation, and had served as long as there were actual hostilities in the States where his regiment was stationed. His illness, too, in consequence of his exertions at Monmouth, had alone caused his resignation. New evidence was obtained, to which Burr added a masterly argument, and the case was again laid before the department. "*Res adjudicatur*," was the prompt reply of a new Secretary. The agent succeeded, however, in inducing the official to admit further argument, and the case reposed for awhile in the departmental pigeon-holes.

Burr now brought his peculiar tactics to bear. In answer to inquiries, he learned that the Secretary had two daughters, one of whom was sought in marriage by a young lawyer who held an appointment in one of the government offices. Retain *him*, wrote Burr, and offer him ten thousand dollars to get the claim allowed. This was done. The case having now a powerful friend at court, made evident progress in the Secretary's good opinion, and, in all probability, the money would have been obtained, but for a most unlooked-for occurrence. As the Secretary entered the President's room at the White

House, one morning, he was greeted by General Jackson with the following observations:

"Mr. ——," roared the general, "I understand that Colonel Burr has an application before your department. Don't have any thing to do with it, sir. There's rascality in it, sir."

Nothing remained for the luckless agent but to pay his hotel bill and go home. On hearing the issue of the business, Burr expressed no resentment whatever against the general, attributing his interference solely to the supposed necessities of his political position. Among those who did what they could to promote Colonel Burr's just claim on this occasion, were members of the celebrated Biddle family of Pennsylvania, whose early fortunes he had taken great interest in advancing.

"Jackson," Colonel Burr would say, "possesses all the attributes of a President fit to rule such a people. He is a man of an iron will — a will of pure well-wrought iron — no base *cast* metal."

"Is he a scholar?" some one asked.

"It is not necessary," replied Burr, "for the President of the United States to be a scholar. Andrew Jackson does not rule by books; he is a man of sound sense, and rules by will."

Jackson's famous oath, "By the Eternal," was a by-word in Burr's house long before it became familiar to the public. He afterward changed it to "By General Jackson," and so swore many a time; for, with all his good temper, he needed, and always had by him, a convenient expletive or two.

A cheerful, active, hale old man was Aaron Burr; none more so ever lived on this crowded, busy island. Young men, spirited women, new books, new events, new inventions, pleasant excursions, and rare adventures, he enjoyed, and keenly enjoyed, down to the seventy-ninth year of his age. He loved an open, blazing fire, and all open, bright, pleasant things, and, in all companies, was the animating spirit.

At the age of seventy-eight, we find him writing as follows to his partner from Albany: "Arrived this evening between six and seven o'clock, having been *forty-five* hours in the stage

without intermission, except to eat a hearty meal. Stages in very bad order — roads excellent for wheels to Peekskill, and thence very good sleighing to this city. The night was uncomfortable; the curtains torn and flying all about, so that we had plenty of fresh air. The term was closed this day. Nelson will hold the special court to-morrow morning — have seen both Wendell and O'Connor this evening — all ready — came neither fatigued nor sleepy."

A clipping from a New York newspaper of some years ago gives us a glimpse of the polite old man, as he looked to the large eyes of an imaginative boy:

"Just round the corner (from Broadway) in Reade-street — we believe on ground now occupied by Stewart's — was the office, for many of the later years of his life tenanted by Aaron Burr. We, when a boy, remember seeing him there, often. It was a dark, smoky, obscure sort of a double-room, typical of his fortunes. Burr had entirely lost caste for thirty years before he died. And whatever may be said of his character and conduct, we think nothing can excuse the craven meanness of the many, who, having fawned around him in the days of his elevation, deserted and reviled him in the after-time of misfortunes. Burr had much of the bad man in him (faith! we'd like to see the human mold that has not), but he was dauntless, intellectual, and possessed the warm temperament of an artist.

"Yes, we remember well that dry, bent, brown-faced little old man, polite as Chesterfield himself, that used to sit by an ancient baize table, in the half-light of the dust-covered room there — not often with work to do — indeed he generally seemed meditating. We can *now* understand it all, though he seemed a strange personage then. What thoughts must have burned and whirled through that old man's brain — *he*, who came within a vote or two of seating himself as a successor of Washington! Even to our boyish judgment then, he was invested with the dignity of a historic theme. He had all the air of a gentleman of the old school — was respectful, self-possessed, and bland, but never familiar. He had seen a

hundred men, morally as unscrupulous as himself, more lucky, for some reason or other, than himself. He was *down;* he was old. He awaited his fate with Spartan calmness — knowing that not a tear would fall when he should be put under the sod."

A little adventure which he had in one of these last years will serve to show how completely he retained the youthful spring of his spirits and muscles to an age when old men generally are willing prisoners of the arm-chair and chimney-corner. He was still living at Jersey City when Fanny Kemble and her father played their first engagement in New York. They created, as many will remember, a "sensation," and the newspapers teemed with articles laudatory of their acting. Burr, who took a lively interest in all that was passing, went to see them perform in the play of the Hunchback, accompanied by a young gentleman, a student of law, to whom I am indebted for the story. At that period, the ferry-boats stopped running soon after dark, and Burr engaged some boatman to be in waiting at the dock to row them back to Jersey after the play was over.

The theater was densely crowded. It was whispered about that Aaron Burr was present, and he was soon the target of a thousand eagerly curious eyes; but no one saluted the man who was "severed from the human race." He sat out the play, admired the acting of Miss Kemble, remarking, among other things, that she "was a fine animal." Meanwhile the weather had changed, and by the time they reached their boat, an exceedingly violent storm of wind and rain was raging, and it was very dark. The waves dashed against the wharf in a manner that was not at all inviting to the younger of the two adventurers, who advised Burr not to cross.

"Why!" exclaimed the old gentleman, as he sprang lightly into the boat, "you are not afraid of a little salt water, are you? This makes an adventure of it. This is the fun of the thing. The adventure is the best of it all."

His companion embarked, and they pushed off. The waves broke over the boat, and drenched them both to the skin in the

first five minutes. On they went, against wind, waves, and tide, and, after an hour's hard rowing, Burr all the while in hilarious spirits, they reached the shore.

Such a tough, merry, indomitable old man was Aaron Burr on the verge of fourscore!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

HIS RELATIONS WITH WOMEN.

"They Say"—Anecdote of Wilberforce—The Errors of M. L. Davis—The Two Wills of Colonel Burr—Anecdotes—Letter of Colonel Burr to a Young Lady—The Age of Gallantry—His Influence over Ladies—His Manners—Causes of his Bad Reputation with Regard to Women—Adventures on the Cold Friday—Other Anecdotes—Burr no Seducer.

One morning, near the close of his life, as he lay upon his bed prostrate with paralysis, a lady said to him in a bantering way:

"Colonel, I wonder, now, if you ever *were* the gay Lothario they say you were?"

The old man turned his eyes, the luster of which was undiminished still, toward the friend who made the remark, and lifting his trembling finger, said in his quiet, impressive whisper, which still lingers in her ears, and which brought tears to her eyes, twenty years after, as she repeated the words:

"They say! *they say!* they say! Ah, my child, how long are you going to continue to use those dreadful words? Those two little words have done more harm than all others. Never use them, my dear. *Never* use them!"

Wonderful, past all imagining, are the slanderer's triumphs in this good gossip-loving world. Where is the D'Israeli who will glean from history and literature such a startling book-full of the Curiosities and Tragedies of Calumny, as shall teach us all never more to believe ill of one another, except upon evidence which leaves no rational ground for doubt — a book that shall deal the death-blow to that fell destroyer of reputations, They say?

Almost as I write, this parapraph afloat just now in the newspapers, catches my eye: "Wilberforce relates that at

one time he found himself chronicled as 'St. Wilberforce,' in an opposing journal, and the following given as 'an instance of his Pharisaism:' 'He was lately seen,' says the journal, 'walking up and down in the Bath Pump Room, reading his prayers, like his predecessors of old, who prayed in the corners of the streets, to be seen of men.' 'As there is generally,' says Mr. Wilberforce, 'some slight circumstance which perverseness turns into a charge of reproach, I began to reflect, and soon found the occasion of the calumny. It was this — I was walking in the Pump Room, in conversation with a friend — a passage was quoted from Horace, the accuracy of which was questioned, and as I had a Horace in my pocket, I took it out and read the words. This was the plain 'bit of wire' which factious malignity sharpened into a pin to pierce my reputation.' How many ugly *pins* have been manufactured out of even smaller bits of wire than even that?"

Ay, indeed! and not "pins" merely, but darts, barbed and poisoned, that torture, rankle, and kill!

Here, perhaps, as conveniently as anywhere, may be said the little that *must* be said respecting the gallantries of Colone. Burr; a subject difficult to treat aright, impossible to avoid. Notorious in his life-time for his amours, and made doubly infamous since his death by the statements of a biographer, Aaron Burr is now universally regarded as the greatest monster of licentiousness that ever lived in the United States. It is no wonder that he is so regarded. On a subject so interesting to the imagination as illicit love, people always exaggerate. And writers seem to think that the popular way of treating it is to overstate a brother's delinquencies, and shed torrents of virtuous indignation over them. That is not the course which is going to be pursued on the present occasion. As I have ascertained the *truth* respecting this matter, and all the truth, the truth shall be told, and told with the addition of every palliating circumstance that fairly belongs to it. The task of throwing stones at the sinner shall be left to those who feel themselves to be without sin.

First, shall be stated what is *not* true respecting Burr's relations with women. Secondly, what *is* true.

Mr. Matthew L. Davis, to whom Colonel Burr left his papers and correspondence, and the care of his fame, prefaces his work with a statement that has, for twenty years, closed the ears of his countrymen against every word that may have been uttered in Burr's praise or vindication. The material part of that statement is the following passage: "Among the papers left in my possession by the late Colonel Burr, there was a mass of letters and copies of letters written or received by him, from time to time, during a long life, indicating no very strict morality in some of his female correspondents. These letters contained matter that would have wounded the feelings of families more extensively than could be imagined. Their publication would have had a most injurious tendency, and created heart-burnings that nothing but time could have cured. As soon as they came under my control I mentioned the subject to Colonel Burr; but he prohibited the destruction of any part of them during his life-time. I separated them, however, from other letters in my possession, and placed them in a situation that made their publication next to impossible, whatever might have been my own fate. As soon as Colonel Burr's decease was known, with my own hands I committed to the fire all such correspondence, and not a vestige of it now remains."

The impression left upon a reader's mind is, that Aaron Burr was indifferent to the fate of such letters; a circumstance which would suffice to damn to eternal infamy the memory of any man. But, fortunately, the means exist of proving that Burr expressly provided for their destruction, and *laid upon Mr. Davis a solemn injunction to that effect!*

Twice in his life, Aaron Burr, in view of threatened or of approaching death, made his will. By the first will, dated on the eve of the duel with Hamilton, he consigned his papers to his daughter's care, and, in his farewell letter to her, gave her a special charge concerning them. He told her to "burn all such as, if by accident made public, would injure any person. This," he adds, "is *more particularly applicable to the letters of my female correspondents.*" In 1834, when he was seventy-nine years of age, he made another will, in which he left his papers to Matthew L. Davis, to be used according to his dis-

cretion. To this will, a few months before his death, he added a codicil which contains the following words: "I direct that all my private papers, except law papers appertaining to suits now defending, be delivered to my friend Matthew L. Davis, Esq., to be disposed of at his discretion, DIRECTING *him, nevertheless, to destroy, or to deliver to parties interested, all such as may, in his estimation, be calculated to affect injuriously the feelings of individuals against whom I have no complaint.*" Of this will Mr. Davis was an executor. How he could have brought himself to omit all mention of the injunctions just quoted, and to assume to himself alone the virtue of destroying the papers, is something inexplicable.

His statement is objectionable, too, from its indefiniteness. He speaks of "a *mass* of letters and copies of letters." On a subject like this, to be vague is to exaggerate. How easy to have given the dimensions of the "mass" or the number of the letters. Every one knows how soon an ordinary correspondence, if all the letters are preserved, presents an imposing "mass" of spoiled writing paper. And it is to be further observed, that a man may have a very warm correspondence with a lady, may make and receive protestations of attachment, without incurring or intending guilt. Granting that this "mass" of letters was of mountainous bulk, it is still no proof of a corresponding criminality.

"Not a vestige of it now remains," adds Mr. Davis, explicitly and positively. That this, too, is an error, I am in a position to prove. After the work of Mr. Davis had been published for some time, he not only had a packet of these letters in his possession, but lent them to an acquaintance to read. The acquaintance referred to is a gentleman eminent in character and in station, and one whose word it would be insulting the community which honors him to doubt. He has himself assured me of the facts. Mr. Davis told him he had found this packet after the solemn burning related in his preface, and, tossing it upon his friend's desk, gave him permission to read the letters. His friend did read a few of them. Some of the letters were evidently the production of illiterate women; but some, written in the French language, were

extremely elegant, both in composition and in sentiment. Nothing particular is recollected of their contents, except that they appeared to be letters of gallantry — as well they might seem to one who carelessly looked over them with a previous impression that they were such. Other evidence that the letters were not all destroyed opportunely reaches me. In Harper's Magazine for July, 1857, the following story derived from the recollections of the late Hon. John Barney, of Maryland, is repeated. Besides showing that the letters (one of them at least) were retained and *used*, it shows the cruel injury which Mr. Davis's preface has done to Col. Burr's memory:

"There never," begins the story in Harper, "was a greater villain than Aaron Burr — never! What is written of him — what has become history and world talk — is nothing to the unwritten, untold deeds of darkness that he was ever perpetrating. His whole life was intrigue. Woman was his spoil. He lived before the world as an aspirant for power: in social life he lived to triumph over the weakness of the sex. His treachery, his infamous exposure of confidential letters addressed to him by ladies of rank and fashion, his utter heartlessness are now well known; but the chapters of his love affairs, if published, will make the most extraordinary revelations that have ever yet appeared in connection with the name of this remarkable man.

"The late honest, but poor Matthew L. Davis, his executor, received from him, while living, trunks full of feminine correspondence, by which Burr sought to make Davis's fortune, but which were generously returned, without fee or reward, to the grateful recipients.

"Lobbying — now an anomaly — was then in full force. Several important bills had passed the New York Legislature, and some were so uncharitable as to intimate that improper influences had been resorted to. Davis was accused of being engaged in bringing about a successful result.

"A lady of rank and fashion condescended — and ladies rarely condescend to mingle in any thing out of their appropriate sphere, the limits of the domestic circle — to say hard

things of Davis; she went so far as to intimate she could calmly look on and see him hung. Davis went to her door, rang the bell, sent up his name, and was promptly answered she was not, and never would be at home to Mr. Davis.

"'Pray ask her if she has heard from her husband at Niagara?'

"He was forthwith invited up stairs. The lady entered in trepidation and alarm.

"'Has any calamity happened to my beloved husband?' said she.

"'This will explain all,' said Davis, handing her a letter in her own chirography, addressed to Colonel Aaron Burr.

"'Good heavens, sir!' said she; 'for what purpose is this letter destined to remain in your possession?'

"'Madam, to be disposed of by you, at your own discretion,' was the reply.

"'My kind friend,' exclaimed she, 'how can I ever repay such an act of unparalleled magnanimity? I, who have spoken so unkindly, so unjustly, of so noble a friend!'

"'Ever afterward,' said Davis, 'she almost broke her neck in extending her head out of the carriage window to greet me as she passed.'"

The lady had reason to be alarmed, though her letter might have been innocent, for, owing to calumnies and exaggerations, circulating uncontradicted for half a century, Burr's reputation at length was such as to cast a shade of suspicion over every woman who had ever been acquainted with him!

Further. Burr's surviving friends, connections, and near acquaintances, however they may differ in minor particulars, all agree in asserting these two things: first, that Burr *never* compromised a woman's name, nor spoke lightly of a woman's virtue, nor boasted of, nor *mentioned* any favors he may have received from a woman; secondly, that of all the men they have ever known, *he* was the man *least* capable of such unutterable meanness! No particulars of any affair of gallantry in which he may have been engaged could ever be extracted from him. He never talked of them.

"Tell me, colonel," said a young friend to him a year or

two before his death, "tell me some of your pretty love adventures."

A smile stole over his face (for the old man had a strange liking to be accused of such things) as he said, shaking his old head:

"No, no; I never kiss and tell."

This was his way, when asked such questions.

Another little scene has been reported to me to illustrate his manner on such occasions. He was lying on a couch. A friend who was arranging his table said to him suddenly.

"Ah! colonel, what is this? Here is a love-lock."

He looked at it, smiled and nodded, took it into his hands and smoothed it with his fingers, but said nothing.

"Whose hair is that, colonel?" asked the friend.

Still fondling it with his fingers he said, smiling, as though his recollections of the head from which he may have cut it, were very pleasant.

"It is very pretty hair."

"I see it is," said the curious lady, "but whose hair is it?"

"It is a lady's hair," he replied.

"I perceive that," said she, with humorous pertinacity, "but I want to know *whose* hair it is."

"Undoubtedly," said he, with some gravity.

"But, colonel," she continued, "I have really a strong desire to know whose hair that was."

"I see you have," was all the reply she could extract from him.

She still persisting, he at length made a reply in such a tone and manner as to preclude all continuance of the conversation, though he spoke with the utmost gentleness.

"Madame," said he, "it was a lady who was once under my protection; and a woman who has ever been in these arms is sacred to me forever."

And yet further. Before Mr. Davis received any of Burr's letters or papers, they were carefully examined by two persons, one of them a male relative of Colonel Burr's, and the other a lady who had an especial and honorable motive for examining every one of them — particularly those addressed to

and received from women. One of these persons still lives her positive and circumstantial testimony, added to that already given, enables me to assert, what I now do assert, that Mr. Davis was utterly mistaken as to the character of the letters to which he alludes. *He received no letters necessarily criminating ladies!* There are persons to whom every act of gallant attention looks like an invitation to love. They can not conceive of affection between the sexes free from passion. They know very well what turn *they* would give to such attachments, if they possessed the power to charm and win the fair, and it is but natural they should misinterpret the gallantries of others. One of the very reasons given by Mr. Davis why he was the man to be intrusted with delicate correspondence was, that his own life being notoriously incorrect, he could not judge harshly another's sins. And in the act of making this avowal, he committed, in the most flagrant manner, the very offense with which his preface charges Colonel Burr. These are facts. It seems fit that they should be stated.

As illustrating Burr's manner toward women, I will here insert a single letter taken from the "mass" of his papers, *before* they fell under the scrutiny of Mr. Davis. I am assured that it is a fair specimen. Written in his seventy-fourth year, in the neatest, daintiest hand, as legible as print, without a blur or erasure, and couched in the language of elegant compliment which gentlemen used in that day whenever they addressed ladies, it is a perfect thing of its kind. It was addressed to a young lady, and explains itself:

"I have this day heard with concern and astonishment that a trifling note, written some days ago, has been the cause of very serious displeasure — it was hastily written, never copied, perhaps not even perused, and the particular terms of it are not recollected. If, however, it contains any other sentiments than those of respect and attachment, they are foreign to my heart.

"That great affection which I bore your father had been transferred to his child — to you I fear the greater portion — yet I had known you only as a child — a child indeed of great promise — and I was impatient to see you as a woman. I did

see you. The tone and cadence of your voice, your language, every movement, every expression, denoted a superiority which charmed me. I was overjoyed to find my friend so faithfully represented in his daughter. I wished to testify my satisfaction, and having frequently called without seeing you, the object of the note was to express my admiration, which appeared to me a tribute of simple justice, and to tender my services to escort you — to walk — to view the town, its improvements and curiosities — in short, to put myself at your orders. It was done openly — this alone should have exonerated me from the suspicion of improper views. It was presumed that it would, and intended that it should, be read by the family, and I amused myself with imagining how much they would be pleased to see that, in the midst of so many vexatious and distressing circumstances, I could for a moment assume the air of playfulness and gayety. I had fancied, too, that you might be the subject of some little raillery, as having excited this spark of momentary animation.

"It is highly probable that this note may have been written in a style of familiarity not warranted, I acknowledge, by any personal acquaintance, but permitted, I thought, or rather felt, for I thought not, by my friendship with your father. But this, perhaps, was an error, for you could have no sympathy with that sentiment, nor knowledge of it, but by cold tradition. Yet, if you can call to mind how you have ever felt in meeting the child of a very dear departed friend, you will cease to censure my presumption.

"But whatever may have been the levity of the note, I may at least claim the privilege of age. At my time of life, one may trifle, if not with impunity, certainly without exciting alarm, and it would imply, in me, a profound ignorance of the world to mistake you for an object of gallantry, and a most ridiculous vanity to presume that I could be a fit pretender to favor.

"A note written with impressions so harmless, and, if my opinion had been of any value, I would have said, so flattering, must have been construed with more than monastic rigor to have received so unkind a sentence. I hope and believe that

at some future period you will recollect it with less severity, and that you will then acknowledge without a blush and without a frown, the purity and the delicacy of that attachment which you now so harshly repel.

"P. S.—Having read this, I am not satisfied with it, nor do I know how better to apologize — but I am unhappy under your displeasure. If you be not altogether inexorable, I would ask, as an evidence of your forgiveness, a surrender of the offensive note."

The letter produced its designed effect. The lady, in spite of the remonstrances of those who surrounded her, would know her father's friend. She lives to declare that from Colonel Burr she received only the most delicate attentions and friendly offices. Having imbibed his ideas of the value of public opinion, being now, an honored wife and mother, and these events being known to none living beyond her own circle, she has no motive for concealment, and is incapable of misrepresentation.

Among the letters which Mr. Davis received, there were enough to fill a volume which proved Burr's boundless generosity to women. There is, at this moment, in this city, a flourishing seminary, which has grown out of a small school which was started for two young ladies by him. He was so straitened at the time that, to procure the money necessary for the purchase of the desks and chairs, he was obliged to pawn his watch and sofa. The recipients of his bounty not unfrequently cherished an ardent attachment for his person, which they expressed in glowing letters. Soon after he returned from Europe, a lady who had known and loved him in better days, wrote him a long history of her fortunes during his absence. I will give the conclusion of this letter merely to show the manner in which a virtuous woman could write to him. She had been soliciting his aid for a relative, and thus proceeds:

"When I consider the miscreants that your goodness has raised, your bounty fed, I think it impossible that the power, which I am sure you would so joyfully exert, should be withheld of raising to distinction one so deserving. Those de-

lightful hours of soul-felt intercourse might then again return, when, unbending from the severe duties of society, I was the soft green of the soul on which you loved to repose; and if, by enjoying, I can impart happiness so exquisite, my heart, my disposition, my feelings, my affections are still the same; glowing with the same warmth, animated with the same ardor.

"Had I been the wife of a prince or a king, I should have flown to you as soon as your arrival was announced, bongré malgré the royal permission. But you will readily conceive how much I am the soul of this establishment. So much so am I, that though the city lays before me as if it was painted on a map, I am often several months without going to it, and am very seldom absent an hour. In August I shall give a short vacation, and will fly anywhere to meet you, though even for a moment.

"You must expect, my dear friend, to see me somewhat changed. Not the *morale* — that is unalterable; but the *physique* has acquired a great accession of embonpoint, which, owing to my height, distributes itself pretty well, so that the proportions are not lost, but the scale considerably enlarged. But this, at the first interview, you will not perceive, nor any thing but a devoted creature irradiated with joy. O, I knew this hour would come. During your absence it was strongly impressed on my mind. In my dreams I have beheld you looking benignantly at me; and something whispered to my heart that at length the hour, with feeling fraught, would be given me; that again in your presence I should feel that unmixed delight which from you only I have received — the happiness attending the most pure, most ardent, most exalted friendship."

When such letters as these fall into the hands of a certain description of men, they receive but one interpretation.

Other passages of Mr. Davis's work require brief examination. "Major Burr," he says, "while yet in college, had acquired a reputation for gallantry. On this point he was excessively vain, and regardless of all those ties which ought to control an honorable mind. In his intercourse with females

he was an unprincipled flatterer, ever prepared to take advantage of their weakness, their credulity, or their confidence. She that confided in him was lost." And again: "It is truly surprising how any individual could have become so eminent as a soldier, as a statesman, and as a professional man, who devoted so much of his time to the other sex as was devoted by Colonel Burr. For more than half a century of his life they seemed to absorb his whole thoughts. His intrigues were without number. His conduct most licentious. The sacred bonds of friendship were unhesitatingly violated when they operated as barriers to the indulgence of his passions." "In this particular, Burr appears to have been unfeeling and heartless. And yet, by a fascinating power, almost peculiar to himself, he so managed as to retain the affection, in some instances, the devotion, of his deluded victims. In every other respect, he was kind and charitable. No man would go further to alleviate the sufferings of another. No man was more benevolent. No man would make greater sacrifices to promote the interest or the happiness of a friend."

One needs to be very slightly acquainted with the habits of Aaron Burr to know that the above must be, at least, a prodigious exaggeration. Not a line of this volume would ever have been written if I had not been perfectly convinced that it is much more than an exaggeration. Aaron Burr was the *busiest* man, perhaps, that ever lived. No lawyer ever prepared his cases with more untiring assiduity, and few lawyers have had more cases to prepare. He was a man who, no matter what assistance he had, saw to every thing himself. His affairs were always large and complicated; and his devotion to them was the wonder of his friends. That such a man, so occupied, should have even *seemed* to devote his whole mind, for fifty years, to the pursuit of the fair sex, is incredible; and the more so as the scene of his exploits was here in the United States, where women, as well from principle as from possessing the intelligence to calculate the consequences of violating it, are the most virtuous in the world. It is agreed among Burr's surviving friends and relatives, most of whom knew him better than Mr. Davis, that the passages quoted above convey

ideas ludicrously at variance with the truth. That he was, at all periods of his life, what we now call a moral man, no one asserts. But that he was any thing *like* the all-consuming, the continuous, the insatiable destroyer, which he has been represented, all unite in declaring, is manifestly and certainly untrue. Not less exaggerated were John Adams's statements respecting Alexander Hamilton, when he speaks of his "prostitutions of power for the purposes of sensual gratification;" of his "debaucheries in New York and Philadelphia;" of "his audacious and unblushing attempts upon ladies of the highest rank and purest virtue;" of "the indignation with which he has been spurned;" and of "the inquietude he has given to the first families." John Adams, an honest man, lived in intimacy with Hamilton for several years; yet few find it difficult to believe the above assertions to be monstrous exaggerations.

In those days, we should remember, gallantry was a practice *expected* of a Man of the World. There was going on everywhere in Christendom a breaking away from the severe creeds and strict morality of the ancient church; one of the surest, and one of the first results of which was, and is, license with regard to women. The young man delivered from the restraints of his youth, and from the latent, always operating terrors of religion, eagerly hastened to gratify a long accumulated curiosity, and to give proof of his emancipation. With the zeal of a new convert, and the keen appetite of young desire, he pursued forbidden pleasure, and boasted of more triumphs than he won. Mr. Lewes, in his Life of Goethe, writing of this period, says:

"Those were the days of gallantry; the days of

"'Puffs, paints, and patches, powders, billet-doux.'

The laxity of the German morals differed only from the more audacious licentiousness of France in having sentimentalism in lieu of gayety and luxuriousness for its basis. The heart of a French marquise was lost over a supper table sparkling with champaigne and *bon mots;* the heart of a

German Gräfin yielded more readily to moonlight melancholy and a copy of verses. Wit and audacity were the batteries for a French woman; the German was stormed with sonnets and a threat of suicide. For the one, Lothario needed sprightliness and *bon ton;* for the other, turbulent disgust at all social arrangements, expressed in interjectional rhetoric, and a deportment outrageous to all conventions. It is needless to add that marriage was, to a great extent, what Sophie Arnauld, with terrible wit, called 'the sacrament of adultery;' and that on the subject of the sexes, the whole tone of feeling was low. Poor, simple, earnest Schiller, whom no one will accuse of laxity, admired the *Liasons Dangereuses*, and saw no reason why women should not read it; although, to our age, the infamy of that book is so great as to stamp a brand upon the society which produced and applauded it. Yet even Schiller, who admired this book, was astounded at the condition of women at Weimar. 'There is hardly one of them,' he writes to Körner, 'who has not had a *liason*. They are all coquettes. One may very easily fall into an "affair of the heart," though it will not *last* any time.' It was thought, apparently, that since Eros had wings, he must use them and fly."

A state of things like this, it need not be said, has had no parallel in the United States. The brilliant skepticism of that age not only made no great progress among the people, but never pervaded the society of the country so far as to give the ruling tone to it. The society of America has been moral from the beginning. It is nevertheless true that among the wits, the more spirited young men of the colleges, the fine gentlemen who had traveled in Europe, the men of books and experiments, the more decided revolutionists and republicans, it was the fashion to admire Voltaire, and to avow the narrow skepticism of Paine. The young scholar-soldiers of the Revolution generally imbibed it; and, demoralized by a camp life, as camp-life then was, many of them became licentious in conduct. But even in this extreme liberal party, there was never more than an approach, *half affected*, half real, to the immorality of continental Europe. Gallantry was, indeed,

much in vogue with all parties. But morality was, also, the *rule* in all.

Aaron Burr, then, was a man of gallantry. He was *not* a debauchee; *not* a corrupter of virgin innocence; *not* a despoiler of honest households; *not* a betrayer of tender confidences. He was a man of gallantry. It is beyond question that, in the course of his long life, he had many intrigues with women, *some* of which (not many, there is good reason to believe) were carried to the point of criminality. The grosser forms of licentiousness he utterly abhorred; such as the seduction of innocence, the keeping of mistresses, the wallowing in the worse than beastliness of prostitution. Not every woman could attract him. He was the most delicate and fastidious of men. A woman of wit, vivacity, and grace, whether beautiful or not, whether an inhabitant of a mansion or a cottage, was the creature who alone, and who always, could captivate him. He was, as it were, a man of gallantry by nature. Every thing appertaining to the sex was peculiarly interesting to him. He doted on a neatly turned billet-doux. He thought highly of the minds of women; he prized their writings. The rational part of the opinions now advocated by the Woman's Rights Conventions, were his opinions fifty years before those Conventions began their useful and needed work. His beautiful picture of Mary Wolstoncroft* (by Opie) he preserved through all the vicissitudes of his life, and gave it away on his death-bed to his last and best friend, in whose possession it still remains.

It was impossible that he should have been addicted to gross sensual indulgencies. A man who is gross in one appetite, is generally gross in all. A man who, like Burr, is temperate in eating and drinking to the degree of abstemiousness, may not be strictly chaste, but he can not be a debauchee. A man who retains to the age of seventy-nine the vigor of manhood and the liveliness of a boy, can not, at any period of his life, have egregiously violated the laws of his being.

All accounts, written and verbal, agree in this, that he possessed an unequaled power of charming the ladies of his day.

* Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman.

His manner toward them soft, courteous, and winning, had also the peculiarity of stimulating them to display their powers and their charms to the best advantage. Witty women were wittiest when talking to him, and they had a flattering consciousness of the fact. He had the art of approaching a lady so, that, whatever gift or grace she most valued herself upon possessing, was called into agreeable exercise; and she felt that she was shining. His handsome face, too, his wonderfully brilliant black eyes, his extremely elegant figure, the careful correctness of his costume, the graceful loftiness of his demeanor, his absolute self-possession, his reputation for bravery and address, his unequaled readiness in complimentary repartee — all, of course, contributed to render him irresistible in the drawing-room — as the drawing-room then was.

And not in the drawing-room only. A foreign lady of distinction, with whom he was very intimate, told me that she never saw such an exhibition of graceful motion and delicate politeness in a man, as when, one evening in his office, he roasted some clams by his office fire, and presented them to her, one by one, on the shell. There was a cry of clams in the street, and the lady having remarked that, as long as she had been in America, she had never tasted those national shell-fish, Burr sent out for some, and, with the assistance of his office boy, roasted and served them with enchanting grace. The same lady informs me there were two things Colonel Burr could do better than any man in the world — *bow out* an obnoxious visitor, and hand a lady to her carriage. "I feel still," said she, "the soft touch of his little hand in mine, as he *glided* across the pavement."

To his own vanity Burr owed much of his reputation for enormous licentiousness. Men who have unusual power to please ladies, have usually the foible to be extremely proud of it. Byron was always boasting of his easy triumphs. Pierrepont Edwards, it is said, was so vain upon this point, that when unjustly charged with the parentage of a child, he could not find it in his heart to deny the soft impeachment, and would pay the sum demanded rather than lose the compliment. And Burr, who was prone to invest his innocent actions with

mystery, often, I am sure, assumed the air of a man who has a "little French girl" behind a book-case, when there was nothing but cobwebs there. He never would refuse to accept the parentage of a child.

"Why do you allow this woman to saddle you with her child, when you *know* you are not the father of it?" said a a friend to him, a few months before his death.

"Sir," he replied, "when a lady does me the honor to name me the father of her child, I trust I shall always be too gallant to show myself ungrateful for the favor!"

That very child, of which it was physically impossible he should have been the father, he claims in his will as his own and leaves it a legacy. At this day we can not understand, nor allow for, such a foible as this. But observe — neither Edwards nor Burr was ever known, in a single instance, *so* to vaunt their prowess as to compromise, in the slightest degree, the character of any woman. On *that* point my informants are explicit and unanimous.

His life-long habit of adopting and educating children, also, tended to increase his reputation for criminal gallantry. Seven persons in ten have no notion of the educational instinct which yearns to develop a natural gift or a noble character. "Why," asked the world, "does he keep that girl at school, or send that boy to college?" "They are his own children, of course," answers Scandal with smiling self-righteousness, nothing doubting. There was a period in the latter part of his life when he contributed to the support of ten women. In the most positive manner, by four individuals, each of whom stood nearer to Burr than Mr. Davis ever did, and one of whom had peculiar means of knowing, I am assured, that not *one* of these women had ever borne to him the relation which the charitable world would infer from the fact of his giving them money. "If," said one of these gentlemen to me, "Burr *had* been a man of gross appetite, he might easily have been the greatest debauchee that ever existed."

Nevertheless, in the mind of the moralist, Burr must stand condemned. Because his errors have been more overstated than those of any other man, he must not be exonerated from

the guilt of those which he did commit. He was guilty toward women — *he*, who should have inaugurated the new morality, the morality which is to convince mankind that liberality of opinion is *not* incompatible with rigorous, with ideal virtue!

How can we deplore enough the licentiousness of that age! It put back the emancipation of the human intellect for a hundred years! Superstition, this day, is living upon the vices of that brilliant, wicked period. How puzzled the wits and philosophers of the last century used to be, that their opinions made so little way with the average intellect of the people. As clear as the sun in the heavens seemed to them the truth of their system. They had on their side a majority of the brightest spirits of the time. Hume, Gibbon, Fox, Franklin, Jefferson, were great men in their day; and though dead they yet speak with a voice potential. Yet the ideas of which these men were the antagonists still rule the world. Doubtless, it is because license in conduct has so often accompanied liberality of thought; because the steady virtue which procures tranquillity of life and safe prosperity was chiefly to be found among those whom philosophers pitied as the "victims of superstition." Virtue is the power of this world. As long as the servant-girl strict at mass and confession is, as a general rule, a better servant and woman than one who is not, the Pope is safe on his throne. The opinions that triumph at last are those which produce noble characters, high morality, well ordered lives.

A few anecdotes illustrative of Burr's relations with women may find place here, and close the chapter.

As an instance of his readiness, the following has been related. Soon after his return from Europe, he met in Broadway a maiden lady somewhat advanced in life, whom he had not seen for many years. He was passing her without recognition, when she said,

"Colonel, do you not recollect me?"

"I do not, madame," was his reply.

"I am Miss K., sir," said she.

"What!" he exclaimed, "Miss K. *yet?*"

"Yes, sir," replied the lady, a little offended, "Miss K. *yet*."

Perceiving the error he had committed, he gently took her hand and, said, in his bland, emphatic manner, "Well, madame, then I venture to assert that it is not the fault of *my* sex!"

Returning one day, in about the seventieth year of his age, from a professional visit to Orange county, New York, he related, with evident delight, an adventure which he had had during his absence. I have the story from the lady to whom he told it first.

It was one of the "cold Fridays" of tradition, when the incident occurred. So cold was it that few living creatures could long support life exposed to the blast. The snow lay deep on the ground; the roads were imperfectly broken; the air was filled with particles of snow blown about by the wind. Colonel Burr had a ride of twenty miles before him that day, to attend a court which met on the day following. He had a companion with him, his partner in the law, a gentleman forty years his junior, who, after trying in vain to persuade him not to attempt the journey, refused, point blank, to accompany him. Burr consulted his man, and finding him willing to go, ordered round his sleigh, they set off about the middle of the day. As night drew on the roads became worse, and the cold increased to such a degree that to keep the blood in motion required laborious exertion. As the wind swept down from the mountains, even the horse shrunk from facing it, and gave signs of yielding to the cold. For himself Burr had no fears; no weather could subdue him; but his driver began to occasion him constant anxiety, as the drowsiness premonitory of the torpor that precedes freezing was coming over him. Finding that the drowsiness increased, he resolved at last to stop at the next house they came to. They were now in a thinly-settled country, which Burr had not seen since revolutionary times, when he had been much in the neighborhood with his regiment. About nine o'clock the light of a little cottage came in sight; to the door of which Burr's summons brought an old lady, who proved to be its only inhabitant.

"Is there hospitality here?" asked Burr; "we are nearly dead with cold."

"Come in," was the old lady's prompt reply, "you are welcome to the best I have."

In a few minutes he had his half-frozen servant by the side of a blazing fire, and his horse in the stable. While they were getting warm, the hostess prepared supper, to which, in due time, they were invited. Restored then to the use of his faculties, Burr looked about him and observed that, though every thing in the room was of an unpretending and inexpensive character, yet all was clean and nicely arranged. The only ornamental object was a plaster bust standing upon a little shelf. He had casually noticed this on entering the room, and looking now to ascertain which of the national favorites it was whom the old lady had selected to adorn her abode, he was astonished to discover that it was a bust of himself! Twenty years before, this would have been no unusual circumstance; but rare indeed was it then for him to be thus reminded of his former condition. More to amuse his servant than for any other reason, he said, as the old lady was putting away her dishes:

"What! have you got that vile traitor here?"

The woman paused in her work as he uttered these words. Her manner changed in a moment. Putting down some plates which she had in her hand, she walked slowly up to the fire where he was sitting, and standing before him, said with intense emphasis:

"Sir, I have taken you in, to-night, and have done the best I could for you: but if you say another word against Aaron Burr, I'll put you and your man out where you came from quicker than you came in."

He apologized, and, after a time, succeeded in regaining her good will. He did not tell her who he was, nor could he recollect her. He supposed that he must have known her in early life, when, as the youngest colonel in the army, and the protector of that county, he must have been a brilliant figure in the imagination of a country girl.

Ten years later, on one of the last journeys he ever made,

he found himself in the neighborhood of Fort Lee, on the Hudson, a few miles above New York. Before the door of a farm-house, he saw a very old woman knitting, and smoking a pipe, whom he thought he recognized as one of his revolutionary acquaintances. Recollecting the incident just related, he entered into conversation with her.

"Did you know," said he, "one Major Burr, or Aaron Burr, in the revolutionary war, hereabouts?"

"What!" said the old woman, "the Aaron Burr that afterward became such a great man? and a bad man, too, they say: tried to overturn the government, they tell me."

"Yes," replied Burr, "that's the man I mean."

"O, yes," said she, with a brightening face, "I remember him *well!*"

"Do you think you should know him again?" Burr asked.

"It's a long time ago," she replied, musing; and then, as a smile broke over her face, she added, "but I think I should know his black eyes."

"Well," said he, "I am the very person."

She looked at him intently. "*You* are Major Burr?" she exclaimed.

"I am, indeed," he said.

She saw that it was indeed the Major Burr of her youth who stood before her; changed as he was, his black eyes were as bright as they were then. She dropped her knitting and her pipe, rose to her feet, threw her arms around his neck, and hugged him long and close. She had not seen him for sixty years, but through all that long period she had cherished the recollection of his valor, courtesy, and tenderness. They sat down, side by side, these two relics of a former age, and talked of the olden time. She had much to tell him of the history of his former friends. She showed him some of the great grand-children of people he had known in the bloom of their youth.

The gentleman from whom I derived this anecdote, adds that, about the same time, he witnessed another remarkable meeting between Burr and ante-revolutionary friends. One of the first acts of hospitality Burr ever performed was

the entertaining of the late Major and Mrs. Popham at his house in Albany. They were, indeed, married at his house, and received from him important services. They were among those who never turned their backs upon him in the day of his misfortunes, though some years had now elapsed since they had seen him. Returning to New York from White Plains, in one of the late years of his life, Colonel Burr visited his old friends at their country seat. "The meeting between Mrs. Popham and Burr," says my informant, "was refined and touching in the extreme, and their whole intercourse was marked by the high-bred courtesy of the revolutionary period. No *bad* man could ever excite the feeling he did in the minds of such women, much less retain their friendship for half a century."

A lady said to Burr one day in his office,

"Come, colonel, no more mystery; tell me now what you really meant to do in Mexico."

He was not to be caught. "Oh," said he, in his light, pleasant manner, "I'd have made it a heaven for women; and if you had then been alone, you should have been there to enjoy it."

He had a great abhorrence of criminal intimacies with honest poor girls. A member of his own household was once seen to take a liberty with the person of a servant girl in his own house. It came to his ears. He expressed the strongest possible disgust. "A man," said he, "who will so much as *look* with lustful eyes upon a servant is no gentleman; and if he does it in the house of a friend, he dishonors that house and insults that friend."

Talking one day with a very intimate friend, respecting his own affairs of gallantry, he uttered these words: "I never had an amour in my life in which I was not met half way. I would be the last man on earth to make such advances where they were not welcome. Nor did I ever do, or say, or write any thing which threw a cloud over a woman's name." This was not said in the way of exculpation, for he never uttered a syllable of that nature. It was a casual remark, arising naturally from the conversation.

On another occasion, a few weeks before his death, in the course of a similar conversation, he said, "Seduction is a crime like no other. No woman can lay her ruin at my door. If I had a son, and he were to bring dishonor upon a family by ruining a daughter, I would shoot him as I would a dog!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

HIS SECOND MARRIAGE.

ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF STEPHEN JUMEL — MADAME JUMEL'S VISIT TO BURE — COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE — BURE MISUSES HER MONEY — THEIR SEPARATION.

BRIEFLY must this singular tale be told. Singular it is in the literal sense of the word; neither in history or in fiction can its parallel be found.

Stephen Jumel, one of those efficient, invincible Frenchmen, who redeem the character of their nation, emigrated at an early age to St. Domingo, where he worked his way to the ownership of a share in a coffee plantation. Warned by a faithful slave, he escaped from his house on the eve of the great massacre, and saw, from a wood to which he had fled, his buildings burned and his plantation laid waste. For many days, fed by his negro friend, he wandered up and down the lonely sea-shore, signaling every ship that passed the island. At length, a boat put off from a vessel and took him on board. At St. Helena, the first port made by the ship, he stopped, and engaging at once in some little speculations, gained some money which he spent in procuring a passage to New York. To that city he had sent from St. Domingo, a quantity of coffee, the proceeds of which he found awaiting his orders on arriving. Provided thus with a small capital, he embarked in trade, prospered, became the owner of a dozen ships, controlled the market for some descriptions of goods,* and retired about the year

* Grant Thorburn says:—"Stephen Jumel, a Frenchman, was among our early 'merchant princes.' One morning, about 10 o'clock, in the year 1806, this gentleman, in company with William Bayard, Harmon Leroy, Archibald Gracie, General Clarkson, and some dozen others, was reading and discussing the news just arrived from Liverpool, in the extraordinary short passage of *seven weeks!* The matter mostly concerned NAPOLEON THE FIRST and the bat

1812 with what was then considered a great fortune. A man of sense, he had married a daughter of New England, a woman as remarkable for energy and talent as himself.

After Napoleon's downfall and the pacification of Europe, the family went to Paris, where they resided in splendor for many years, and where Madame Jumel, by her wit and tact, achieved a distinguished position in the court society of the place. Of the court itself she was a favored frequenter.

In the year 1822, M. Jumel lost a considerable part of his fortune, and madame returned alone to New York, bringing with her a prodigious quantity of grand furniture and paintings. Retiring to a seat in the upper part of Manhattan Island, which she possessed in her own right, she began with native energy the task of restoring her husband's broken fortunes. She cultivated her farm; she looked vigilantly to the remains of the estate; she economized. In 1828, when M. Jumel returned to the United States, they were not as rich as in former days, but their estate was ample for all rational purposes and enjoyments. In 1832, M. Jumel, a man of magnificent proportions, very handsome, and perfectly preserved (a great waltzer at seventy), was thrown from a wagon and fatally injured. He died in a few days. Madame was then little past her prime.

There was talk of cholera in the city. Madame Jumel resolved upon taking a carriage tour in the country. Before setting out, she wished to take legal advice respecting some

tle of Wagram. While thus engaged, a carman's horse backed his cart into the Whitehall slip, at the head of which they were grouped together. The cart was got out, but the horse was drowned, and every one began pitying the poor carman's ill luck. Jumel instantly arose, and placing a ten dollar bill between his thumb and fingers, and holding it aloft, while it fluttered in the breeze, and with his hat in the other hand he walked through the length and breadth of the crowd exclaiming, 'How much you pity the poor man? *I* pity him ten dollars. How much *you* pity him?' By this ingenious and noble *coup-d'etat*, he collected, in a few moments, above seventy dollars, which he gave over at once to the unfortunate and fortunate carman. (This is the original story — there have been many *imitations* of it since; but the *idea* of 'pitying a man' so much money, originated with my old acquaintance Jumel.)"

real estate, and as Colonel Burr's reputation in that department was preëminent, to his office in Reade-street she drove. In other days he had known her well, and though many an eventful year had passed since he had seen her, he recognized her at once. He received her in his courtliest manner, complimented her with admirable tact, listened with soft deference to her statement. He was the ideal man of business — confidential, self-possessed, polite — giving his client the flattering impression that the faculties of his whole soul were concentrated upon the affair in hand. She was charmed, yet feared him. He took the papers, named the day when his opinion would be ready, and handed her to her carriage with winning grace. At seventy-eight years of age, he was still straight, active, agile, fascinating.

On the appointed day she sent to his office a relative, a student of law, to receive his opinion. This young gentleman, timid and inexperienced, had an immense opinion of Burr's talents; had heard all good and all evil of him; supposed him to be, at least, the acutest of possible men. He went. Burr behaved to him in a manner so exquisitely pleasing, that, to this hour, he has the liveliest recollection of the scene. No topic was introduced but such as were familiar and interesting to young men. His manners were such as this age of slangy familiarity can not so much as imagine. The young gentleman went home to Madame Jumel only to extol and glorify him.

Madame and her party began their journey, revisiting Ballston, whither, in former times, she had been wont to go in a chariot drawn by eight horses; visiting Saratoga, then in the beginning of its celebrity, where, in exactly ten minutes after her arrival, the decisive lady bought a house and all it contained. Returning to New York to find that her mansion had been despoiled by robbers in her absence, she lived for a while in the city. Colonel Burr called upon the young gentleman who had been madame's messenger, and, after their acquaintance had ripened, said to him, "Come into my office; I can teach you more in a year than you can learn in ten, in an ordinary way." The proposition being submitted to Madame

Jumel, she, anxious for the young man's advancement, gladly and gratefully consented. He entered the office. Burr kept him close at his books. He *did* teach him more in a year than he could have learned in ten in an ordinary way. Burr lived then in Jersey City. His office (23 Nassau-street) swarmed with applicants for aid, and he seemed now to have quite lost the power of refusing. In no other respects, bodily or mental, did he exhibit signs of decrepitude.

Some months passed on without his again meeting Madame Jumel. At the suggestion of the student, who felt exceedingly grateful to Burr for the solicitude with which he assisted his studies, Madame Jumel invited Colonel Burr to dinner. It was a grand banquet, at which he displayed all the charms of his manner, and shone to conspicuous advantage. On handing to dinner the giver of the feast, he said: "I give you my hand, madame; my heart has long been yours." This was supposed to be merely a compliment, and was little remarked at the time. Colonel Burr called upon the lady; called frequently; became ever warmer in his attentions; proposed, at length, and was refused. He still plied his suit, however, and obtained at last, not the lady's consent, but an *undecided No.* Improving his advantage on the instant, he said, in a jocular manner, that he should bring out a clergyman to Fort Washington on a certain day, and there he would once more solicit her hand.

He was as good as his word. At the time appointed, he drove out in his gig to the lady's country residence, accompanied by Dr. Bogart, the very clergyman who, just fifty years before, had married him to the mother of his Theodosia. The lady was embarrassed, and still refused. But then the scandal! And, after all, why not? Her estate needed a vigilant guardian, and the old house was lonely. After much hesitation, she at length consented to be dressed, and to receive her visitors. And she was married. The ceremony was witnessed only by the members of Madame Jumel's family, and by the eight servants of the household, who peered eagerly in at the doors and windows. The ceremony over, Mrs. Burr ordered supper. Some bins of M. Jumel's wine

cellar, that had not been opened for half a century, were laid under contribution. The little party was a very merry one. The parson, in particular, it is remembered, was in the highest spirits, overflowing with humor and anecdote. Except for Colonel Burr's great age (which was not apparent), the match seemed not an unwise one. The lurking fear he had had of being a poor and homeless old man was put to rest. She had a companion who had been ever agreeable, and her estate a steward than whom no one living was supposed to be more competent.

As a remarkable circumstance connected with this marriage, it may be just mentioned that there was a woman in New York who had aspired to the hand of Colonel Burr, and who, when she heard of his union with another, wrung her hands and shed tears! A feeling of that nature can seldom, since the creation of man, have been excited by the marriage of a man on the verge of fourscore.

A few days after the wedding, the "happy pair" paid a visit to Connecticut, of which State a nephew of Colonel Burr's was then governor. They were received with attention. At Hartford, Burr advised his wife to sell out her shares in the bridge over the Connecticut at that place, and invest the proceeds in real estate. She ordered them sold. The stock was in demand, and the shares brought several thousand dollars. The purchasers offered to pay *her* the money, but she said, "No; pay it to my husband." To him, accordingly, it was paid, and he had it sewed up in his pocket, a prodigious bulk, and brought it to New York, and deposited it in his own bank, to his own credit.

Texas was then beginning to attract the tide of emigration which, a few years later, set so strongly thither. Burr had always taken a great interest in that country. Persons with whom he had been variously connected in life had a scheme on foot for settling a large colony of Germans on a tract of land in Texas. A brig had been chartered, and the project was in a state of forwardness, when the possession of a sum of money enabled Burr to buy shares in the enterprise. The greater part of the money which he had brought from Hart-

ford was invested in this way. It proved a total loss. The time had not yet come for emigration to Texas. The Germans became discouraged and separated, and, to complete the failure of the scheme, the title of the lands in the confusion of the times, proved defective. Meanwhile madame, who was a remarkably thrifty woman, with a talent for the management of property, wondered that her husband made no allusion to the subject of the investment; for the Texas speculation had not been mentioned to her. She caused him to be questioned on the subject. He begged to intimate to the lady's messenger that it was no affair of her's, and requested him to remind the lady that she now had a husband to manage her affairs, and one who would manage them.

Coolness between the husband and wife was the result of this colloquy. Then came remonstrances. Then estrangement. Burr got into the habit of remaining at his office in the city. Then, partial reconciliation. Full of schemes and speculations to the last, without retaining any of his former ability to operate successfully, he lost more money, and more, and more. The patience of the lady was exhausted. She filed a complaint accusing him of *infidelity*, and praying that he might have no more control or authority over her affairs. The accusation is now known to have been groundless; nor, indeed, at the time was it seriously believed. It was used merely as the most convenient legal mode of depriving him of control over her property. At first, he answered the complaint vigorously, but afterward, he allowed it to go by default and proceedings were carried no further. A few short weeks of happiness, followed by a few months of alternate estrangement and reconciliation, and this union, that begun not inauspiciously, was, in effect, though never in law, dissolved. What is strangest of all is, that the lady, though she never saw her husband during the last two years of his life, cherished no ill-will toward him, and shed tears at his death. To this hour, Madame Jumel thinks and speaks of him with kindness, attributing what was wrong or unwise in his conduct to the infirmities of age.

Men of seventy-eight have been married before and since. But, probably, never has there been another instance of a man of that age, winning a lady of fortune and distinction, grieving another by his marriage, and exciting suspicions of incontinence against himself by his attentions to a third!

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HIS LAST YEARS AND HOURS.

Stricken with Paralysis — His Last and Best Friend — Anecdotes of His Sickness — Dying Declaration Respecting His Expedition — Interviews with a Clergyman — His Last Moments — Funeral — Monument.

One morning, about the close of the year 1833, while Colnel Burr, in company with a friend, was passing the old City Hotel, in the lower part of Broadway, his step suddenly faltered, he leaned heavily upon his friend's arm, and was soon compelled to come to a halt.

"What is the matter, colonel?" asked his friend.

"I don't know," was his reply; "something seems to be the matter with my walking; I can't step; there 's no feeling nor strength in this leg."

He was assisted to the wall of the hotel, where he leaned for a few moments, hoping the strange affection would pass off. As it grew no better, a carriage was called; he was driven to his office in Nassau-street, and a doctor was summoned, who pronounced the disease paralysis. Prostrate and helpless was the active man at last. His wife, with whom he had not lived for some time, forgot the losses she had suffered through his indiscretion, when she heard that he was sick, and went to see him. "Come *home*," said she; "here you can have no proper attendance." Her carriage was at the door, and he went home with her to Fort Washington, where a month's assiduous and tender nursing, to the surprise of every one, restored him. But just as soon as he was upon his feet again, he was eager to be in town, at his suits, at his speculations; and it was after this "first warning," that the legal proceedings were instituted which led to the final estrangement between the ill-mated pair.

He would never own that he had had a paralytic stroke. He insisted that he was perfectly well, and was offended if any one asked a question which implied the contrary. Tenaciously he clung to life. He would be the beau, the man of business, the great lawyer, to the last.

But a second stroke followed, a few months later, depriving forever of life and motion both his lower limbs. There was no concealing this calamity. Yet, for a while, his mind was as active as ever, and his general health unimpaired. Reclining upon a sofa in his office, he saw his friends and clients as usual, and wrote letters, billet-doux, notes, opinions, without number. His pen should walk for him, travel for him, plead for him; he would be thought, as he thought himself, as efficient a man as ever he was. This could not last. It was apparent to every one but himself that his mental powers were no longer adequate to the discharge of business, and partly by a sense of decreasing strength, partly by the persuasions of friends, he was induced gradually to relax his hold upon mundane things, and subside into the tranquillity that befitted his age and condition.

The close of his life was solaced and cheered by a friend, who proved herself a friend indeed. Far back to the earliest days of the Revolution we must look for the first of the series of events which secured to the helpless old man those tender attentions from the hand and heart of a woman which age and sickness need.

During the expedition to Canada, while the American forces lay near the heights of Quebec, Burr, whose stock of provisions was reduced to a biscuit and an onion, went down to a small brook to drink. Having no cup, he was proceeding to use the top of his cap as a drinking vessel, when a British officer who had come to the other side of the brook for the same purpose saluted him politely, and offered him the use of his hunting cup. Burr accepted the offer, and the two enemies entered into conversation. The officer, pleased with the frank and gallant bearing of the youth — for a youth he seemed — concluded the interview by bestowing upon him the truly munificent gift of part of a horse's tongue. They in-

quired each other's name. "When next we meet," said the Briton, "it will be as enemies, but if we should ever come together after the war is over, let us know each other better." Stepping upon some stones in the middle of the brook, they shook hands, and parted. In the subsequent operations of the war, each saw the other occasionally, but before the peace the British officer went home badly wounded.

Thirty-six years after, when Colonel Burr was an exile in Scotland, he met that officer again; an old man then, residing upon his estate. Each had a vivid recollection of the scene at the brook in the old wars, and a warm friendship sprang up between them. Colonel Burr visited the house of the aged officer, and received from him assistance of the most essential kind, namely, a loan of three hundred pounds, besides valuable introductions.

Twenty-four years later, the daughter of that Scottish officer, ruined in fortune by a husband's extravagance, was at the head of a large boarding house in New York, near the Bowling Green. Both herself and her husband had been friends of Colonel Burr ever since their arrival in New York, and, after her husband's death, Burr was her lawyer and man-of-business. This lady was, and is, one of the kindest and sprightliest of her sex; a woman of high breeding, with too little of the provincial in her character to have more than a very slight respect for that terror of provincial souls, MRS. GRUNDY.

She heard that Colonel Burr was lying sick and helpless at his office, and she went to see him. She sent him delicacies from her table. She kept a general oversight of his domestic arrangements for some months, and then, with her husband's hearty concurrence (she had married again) invited and urged him to come and take up his abode in her house as long as he lived. He should pay the extra expenses which she might incur, but he should be, in effect as in name, her guest. The summer of 1834 saw him established in the two basement rooms of her house, with all his familiar relics, books, pictures, and furniture round him. It was the "old Jay house" — where his former friend, Governor John Jay, had resided. Another

coincidence was, that the man-servant who chiefly waited upon him at this time, had been for many years butler to De Witt Clinton.

For two years he lay upon his bed, or reclined in an arm-chair, free from pain, and growing weaker only by insensible degrees. Ever cheerful, often merry, always kind, visited occasionally by his old friends, and visited continually by old and new pensioners; every want anticipated and supplied, his life glided on tranquilly toward its close. He caused the portrait of Theodosia to be hung so that he could look upon it as he lay in bed, and tears have been observed to course slowly down his furrowed cheeks as he gazed upon it. For hours at a time he would lie silent with his eyes fixed upon his daughter's face. Always inclined to be taciturn, he was now more silent than ever. Never accustomed to speak ill or harshly of others, he never, during these two years, alluded to any one but with charity. He gave very little trouble to his attendants, and addressed them always with marked courtesy. A sick girl was never more delicate than he.

In the early months of his sickness he took the most intense interest in the affairs of Texas, then in the midst of her struggle for independence, aided by thousands of American citizens. A gentleman who called upon him one morning, at this period, found him, newspaper in hand, all excitement, his eyes blazing.

"*There!*" exclaimed the old man, pointing to the news from Texas, "you see? I was right! I was only thirty years too soon! What was treason in me thirty years ago, is patriotism now!!"

He lived to see Texas an independent State — made such chiefly by emigrants and adventurers from the United States.

Phrenology became the town-talk in 1835. It was a new thing with us then, and had few adherents. The young poet Barlow, one of the first practitioners in the science, dined one day at the house where Colonel Burr resided, when it occurred to the landlady to give him an opportunity to test his power of reading character. She said to him, "We have an old gentleman from the country upon a visit to us, whom I

should like you to see. He seems to me to have quite a remarkable head, though he is not a highly educated man."

The phrenologist having intimated his willingness to examine him, she went below to prepare Colonel Burr for the interview, cautioning him to say nothing, and, above all, to keep still, lest a bow or a gesture should betray him. He was reclining in a chair, attired in a flannel dressing-gown, when Barlow was ushered into his apartment. His nurse, who was sitting at a table sewing, was to personate the daughter of the old gentleman.

"This gentleman, sir," said the lady, "is a phrenologist, and I have brought him to examine your head."

He nodded, and the examination began.

"What a head!" was the phrenologist's first whisper. "Who is he? Where does he come from?"

"Oh," replied the lady, "he is an old friend of my father's. He lives in Connecticut, and has come to the city for medical advice. But I won't tell you any thing more about him till you have given us his character. You wouldn't suppose him to be a clergyman, would you?"

"A clergyman!" exclaimed Barlow. "Great heavens. No! I would sooner take him for a man of war than a man of peace. If he had been an educated man, he could have set the world in arms! This is a Van Buren head, only of higher ambition and greater powers."

"He would have made a good soldier, then, if he had been called upon to fight?" inquired the lady.

"Such a head as *that*," said the phrenologist, "might have led an army, and conquered a world! It is a great head! a very great head! What a pity he should have lived in obscurity! With many noble traits of character, however, he has some bad ones. He is generous to a fault. He takes pleasure in giving, whether his own or other's property. He is very secretive; relies on his own judgment; is seldom swerved by the advice of others. He feels that he was born to command, and is as brave as a lion. He would have made a great scholar, a great statesman, a great orator, a great any thing, if he had but had the chance. Yet he can descend to

duplicity to gain his ends. He is not over-conscientious when his passions or his feelings are concerned. As a statesman, he would have been diplomatic, and firm as a rock, whether for evil or for good. A firm friend, without boasting or presuming. More generous than just. He has little reverence, yet would scarcely be an unbeliever. His head is indeed a study — a strange, contradictory head. He is very irritable, and impatient of control. He could look into the souls of men. Gracious! what a lawyer he would have made! And that's his daughter, is it? What a difference! One would almost think it impossible. This head is one of those that think every thing possible, and will dare all to gain a point. He has been fond of the fair sex, too, in his day. But his bad qualities are overtopped by his good ones. And now, pray tell me who this gentleman is?"

"Colonel Aaron Burr, sir," replied the lady, in triumph.

The phrenologist started back, with a curious blending of curiosity and shame expressed in his face and attitude.

"Oh, sir, pardon me," he said; "if I had known who it was that I was examining, I should not have presumed to say what I have said. But this is an honor I have long wished for, and nothing could have given me greater delight."

"Sir," whispered Burr, in his blandest manner, "you have given me no offense."

This ended the interview. The next day, the lady said to him that she thought Mr. Barlow had hit his character very correctly.

"No, madame," he replied, with unexpected gravity, "he made some great mistakes. He said I was irritable. I am not irritable."

The phrenologist was right, however. He had been irrita ble in his way.

His chief amusement during these monotonous months was reading. He read much, but not many things. Chiefly he liked his good friend to read to him something of a tender or sentimental cast. Sterne was a great favorite, particularly the story of Le Fevre in Tristram Shandy. Uncle Toby's treatment of the fly was quite to his taste. One day, after a long

reading from Sterne, he said, "If I had read Sterne more, and Voltaire less, I should have known that the world was wide enough for Hamilton and me."

It was a custom of the busy lady of the house to visit him twice every day. The doctor ordered him champagne, which she used to bring him with her own hands after dinner. Revived by the draught, he would then be eager to hear something read. "Well, my child," he would say, "have you any thing to comfort me with to-day? Read something good, something classical, something sweet. Let us have a pleasant half hour." The lady, herself a poetess, liked nothing better than to repeat to him her favorites and his own. Some bits of Moore he was never tired of hearing; above all, he liked the poem written by Moore upon hearing that the Prince Regent, with his usual meanness, had deserted a lovely girl whom he had ruined. Burr loathed conduct of that nature with a perfect loathing.

"When first I met thee, warm and young,
There shone such truth about thee,
And on thy lip such promise hung,
I did not dare to doubt thee.
I saw thee change, yet still relied,
Still clung with hope the fonder,
And thought, though false to all beside,
From *me* thou could'st not wander.
But go, deceiver! go,
The heart, whose hopes could make it
Trust one so false, so low,
Deserves that thou shouldst break it.

"When every tongue thy follies named,
I fled the unwelcome story;
Or found, in even the faults they blamed,
Some gleams of future glory.
I still was true, when nearer friends
Conspired to wrong, to slight thee;
The heart that now thy falsehood rends
Would then have bled to right thee.
But go, deceiver! go —
Some day, perhaps, thou'lt waken
From pleasure's dream, to know
The grief of hearts forsaken."

Moore's "Oft in the stilly night," was another of his favorites. When his memory was almost gone, he would whisper the first line, and ask, "How does it go on, my dear? Say it." Some psalms and hymns that he had learned in childhood seemed to linger in his memory. One psalm, in particular, he often repeated and praised:

> "It was not any open foe
> That false reflections made."

Nothing pleased him better than a timely and apt quotation. Some gentlemen were in his room one evening, when the conversation took a severer tone than he liked. Slow to speak ill of any one, he never relished denunciatory language. After one of his guests had finished some severe remarks, the lady of the house stepped forward, and in the quick, graceful manner peculiar to her, repeated these lines from Burns's Address to the Unco Gude:

> 'Then gently scan your brother man,
> Still gentler sister woman;
> Though they may gang a kennin' wrang,
> To step aside is human;
> One point must still be greatly dark,
> The moving *Why* they do it;
> And just as lamely can ye mark
> How far, perhaps, they rue it.
>
> "Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
> Decidedly can try us;
> He knows each chord — its various tone,
> Each spring — its various bias;
> Then at the balancé let 's be mute,
> We never can adjust it;
> What's done we partly may compute,
> But know not what's resisted."

Good humor was restored; a better spirit prevailed in the company. Burr, who had lain silent up to this time, now expressed the keenest delight. "*How* good!" he kept whispering. "How *very* good. So like you, my dear; *so* like

you!" He was exceedingly pleased, and often alluded to the scene and the lines afterward.

He was a foe to melancholy, to the last. His kind friend said to him one evening, when he seemed weaker than usual: "Well, colonel, I'm afraid we shan't have you here long; but it 's a sad world, after all, and I wish I was going too."

"Don't say so, child," said he; "I have lived my day; you are young; your time is before you; enjoy it."

On another occasion, when she had met with an affliction, she said to him, "O, colonel, how *shall* I get through this?"

"LIVE through it, my dear!" was his emphatic reply.

Still complaining, she said, "This *will* kill me, colonel, I know I can not survive *this*."

"Well," said he, "*die*, then, madame: we must all die; but bless me, die game!"

One lovely afternoon, she said, as she arranged his pillows, "O! colonel, if you were only forty years younger, and we were walking by the side of some pleasant stream, with beautiful flowers all around us, how happy we could be this afternoon."

"Well, my child," said he, "and we *shall* walk by the side of pleasant streams, amid beautiful flowers, if we are to believe the Book!"

Bringing him the papers, as usual, one morning she called his attention to some false statements relating to his duel with Hamilton, and said to him,

"How can you, colonel, let these people traduce you so, when you have the documents in your possession that would exonerate you?"

"I am already exonerated," was his reply.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"*There!*" said he, pointing upward.

A scene occurred in the dining-room of the house while he lay helpless, which may as well be related here. A gentleman called to engage board, found suitable rooms, and said he would call in the afternoon to say whether he would take them. He came to dinner. Addressing himself in an embarrassed, hesitating manner to the landlady, he said he had

just heard of a circumstance which would deprive him of the pleasure he had anticipated in residing under her roof. He understood that Aaron Burr was a boarder in the house, and he really could not live in the same house with a man of that character.

The blood of all the Montroses was up in a moment. She rose from her chair, and said, with flashing eye, and subdued intensity of tone:

"You have been misinformed, sir, Colonel Burr is *not* a boarder in this house. He is my guest, sir, my honored guest! Before any boarder in this house is served, Colonel Burr is served."

Then, turning to a servant who was waiting at the table, she said, in the manner of Napoleon ordering a column to the attack, "Patrick, take away that person's plate, and open the door!"

Patrick obeyed, and the "person" retired without venturing any further observations.

This brave lady could not, of course, escape sharing, to some extent, the odium that surrounded the name of the man whose last days her wit and kindness cheered.

"What do you think I've heard this morning, colonel?" said she to him on one occasion. "They say I'm your daughter."

"Well," said he, "we don't care for that, do we?"

"Not a bit!" was her reply. "But they say something else, colonel," she continued; "they say I was your mistress."

"Do they?" said he, "I don't think we care much for that either, do we?"

"They must say what they choose," she replied—the gallant soldier's daughter!

"But," said he, taking her hand in both his, and lifting it to his lips, his hands shaking with paralysis, "I'll tell you something they *might* say that would be true! Let them say this of you: *She gave the old man a home when nobody else would!*"

He uttered these words with an emphasis so tender and penetrating, that two of his relatives who were present, one a

member of the bar, and the other a judge, could not refrain from tears.

To the last he was ever giving. His friend said to him once,

"I think you are not particular enough in your charities. The man to whom you have just given money, I am sure, is a drunkard."

"He may be," said Burr, "but that has nothing to do with what I gave him. He asked it for God's sake, and for God's sake I gave it."

"O, colonel," said she, "you can't say no; can you?"

"Not when I have any thing to give," he replied. "I am, indeed, an exquisite fool, an inimitable fool."

As a set-off to this, it must be recorded that a dunning scene, of considerable violence on the part of the dunner, took place during these months. The man, it appears, called several times without hitting upon one of the periods when the exchequer had been very recently replenished, and, of course, could not get his money. He flew into a great rage, at length, and berated the old man with fluency. Burr made not the least reply to him, but waited placidly till it was over, and then addressed a remark on some other subject to another person. The man stood a moment with a puzzled and balked expression of countenance, and then retired. It should be added that Burr's pecuniary affairs, at this time, were managed for him by a relative — an application to whom would not have been so unsuccessful. But it is good always to bear in mind that fierce dunning is the natural accompaniment of loose spending.

In the spring of 1836 it was apparent to those about him that his strength was rapidly diminishing, and that a very few months or weeks would terminate his mortal career. He knew it himself, and spoke of it without reserve. He was more than resigned; at times, he seemed slightly impatient for the closing scene. While thus waiting for death, he never seemed to look *forward*, curious to penetrate the vail, behind which he was soon to pass. His mind wandered *backward* to the remote past. From a long doze of some hours' duration,

he would awake to speak of people at Princeton, whom he had known at college, of fellow soldiers in the revolutionary war, of Theodosia and her boy. He talked sometimes of the biography which he knew was to be published after his death, and appeared to be anxious that, at last, his countrymen should know him as he was. He was most concerned that his military career should be fully and truly related. "If they persist in saying that I was a bad man," he said, "they shall at least admit that I was a good soldier." He wished to be thought brave. In speaking of his own death he would say, "A brave man never fears death," or, "Death is terrible only to cowards," or, "Death has no terrors for me."

In the early part of June, when the weather grew suddenly warm, he was supposed for some days to be sinking. Dr. Hosack, who attended him, thought that a few days, perhaps a few hours, were all that he had to live. Mr. Davis told him the doctor's opinion, and, in view of his approaching death, asked him whether, in the expedition to the South-west, he had designed a separation of the Union. With some impatience he replied,

"No; I would as soon have thought of taking possession of the moon, and informing my friends that I intended to divide it among them!"

He revived. It chanced that the "Jay House" was that summer to be pulled down, and it was necessary that he should be removed. Lodgings were procured for him for the summer, at Port Richmond, on Staten Island, in a small hotel that stood, and still stands, a few yards from the steamboat landing. At parting with his kind hostess, he showed extreme sensibility. He was tenderly grateful to her for her unbounded goodness to him, and expressed his gratitude in a thousand quaint and delicate ways, which can scarcely be described in words. "What are you," he would ask, "that you should be so kind to the old man?" And she would reply that "she was the little mouse that came to the help of the sick lion." He liked an apt reply of that kind; afterward, he would often run his fingers fondly through her auburn locks, and call her his little mouse. He was carried to the steamboat on

a litter, accompanied by a few of his friends, among whom *she*, of course, was one. She saw him safe into his apartment at Port Richmond, in which she had before placed the articles essential to his comfort, and then left him in charge of his nurse and the man-servant before mentioned, an aged and responsible man. Relatives of Colonel Burr lived near, who also visited him, and saw that his wants were all supplied.

"Good-by, colonel," said his friend, as she was leaving him for the night. "Good-by; I shall come and see you every day."

He took her hand, and raising it between his own in the manner of supplication, he said, in a tone of mingled tenderness and fervency never to be forgotten: "May God for ever, and for ever, and for *ever*, bless you, my last, best friend. When the HOUR comes, I will look out, in the better country, for one bright spot for you — be sure."

The sea air at first benefited him greatly; and he even felt so much better as to talk of returning to the city and continuing his law business. His friends dissuaded him. He went so far as to set on foot a small intrigue with some oystermen, with the design of getting them to row him back to the city on the sly. The price was agreed upon, and the time appointed, when the plot was discovered by his friends, and defeated by a counter plot. They invited him to ride. As the time approached when the oystermen were to meet him, he exhibited signs of uneasiness, and proposed, at last, that they should turn back.

"Why, colonel," said one of them, "we started, you know, for Richmond, and I thought you were a man who always carried through what you undertook."

"Drive on," was his quick reply; and thus his little last plot was defeated.

As the summer advanced his strength declined. The last weeks of his life were cheered by the frequent visits of the Rev. Dr. P. J. Vanpelt, the estimable Reformed Dutch clergyman of the neighborhood, who was invited to attend him by Judge Ogden Edwards, a relative and active friend of Colonel Burr's. Burr accepted his visits and services with thankful

courtesy, without making any compromise of his own opinions.

"I was uniformly received by him," writes Dr. Vanpelt, "with his accustomed politeness and urbanity of manner. The time spent with him at each interview — which was an hour, more or less — was chiefly employed in religious conversations, adapted to his declining health, his feeble state of body, and his advanced age, concluding by prayer to Almighty God for the exercise of his great mercy, the influence of his Holy Spirit and divine blessing. In all which he appeared to take an interest and be pleased, and particularly would thank me for the prayers I offered up in his behalf, for my kind offices, and the interest I took in his spiritual welfare, saying it gave him great pleasure to see me and hear my voice. And when I reminded him of the advantages he had enjoyed, of his honored and pious ancestry, viz.: his father a minister of the Gospel, and President of the College at Princeton, New Jersey, and his mother a descendant of the learned and celebrated divine, Jonathan Edwards; and that doubtless many prayers had gone up to heaven from the hearts of his parents for his well-being and happiness, it seemed to affect him. And when I asked him as to his views of the holy Scriptures, he responded — 'They are the most perfect system of truth the world has ever seen.' So that judging from his own declaration and behavior to me, as his spiritual adviser, he was not an atheist nor a deist.

"I did not administer the holy sacrament to him, nor did he suggest or request me to do it.

"In regard to other topics, in the course of repeated conversations, he remarked he was near General Montgomery when he fell at Quebec; and that notwithstanding that disaster, if the army had pushed on, they would have succeeded In reference to the affair and death of General Hamilton but little was said. He intimated, however, that he was provoked to that encounter.

"At my last interview with him, about twelve o'clock at noon, the day he departed this life, I found him, as usual,

pleased to see me, tranquil in mind, and not disturbed by bodily pain.

"Observing a paleness and change in his countenance, and his pulse tremulous, fluttering, and erratic, I asked him how he felt. He replied, not so well as when I saw him last. I then said, 'Colonel, I do not wish to alarm you, but judging from the state of your pulse, your time with us is short.' He replied, 'I am aware of it.' It was then near one o'clock, P.M., and his mind and memory seemed perfect. I said to him, 'In this solemn hour of your apparent dissolution, believing, as you do, in the sacred Scriptures, your accountability to God, let me ask you how you feel in view of approaching eternity; whether you have good hope, through grace, that all your sins will be pardoned, and God will, in mercy, pardon you, for the sake of the merits and righteousness of his beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who in love suffered and died for us the agonizing, bitter death of the cross, by whom alone we can have the only sure hope of salvation?' To which he said, with deep and evident emotion, 'On that subject I am coy;' by which I understood him to mean, that on a subject of such magnitude and momentous interest, touching the assurance of his salvation, he felt coy, cautious (as the word denotes) to express himself in full confidence.

"With his usual cordial concurrence and manifest desire we kneeled in prayer before the throne of heavenly grace — imploring God's mercy and blessing. He turned in his bed, and put himself in an humble, devotional posture, and seemed deeply engaged in the religious service, thanking me, as usual, for the prayer made for him.

"Calm and composed, I recommended him to the mercy of God, and to the word of his grace, with a last farewell."

The last audible word whispered by the dying man was the one, of all others in the language, the most familiar to his lips. A few minutes before he breathed his last, he lifted his hand with difficulty to his spectacles, and seemed to be trying to take them off. His attendant asked him if he wished them removed. He nodded assent. Fixing his eyes (brilliant to the last) upon the spectacles in her hand, he faintly whispered,

"*Madame,*"
evidently meaning that they were to be given to madame, the friend of his last years. He lay awhile softly breathing. At two o'clock in the afternoon, without a struggle or a sigh, as gently as an infant falls asleep, he ceased to live. His friend arrived from the city an hour too late to close his eyes.

He died on Wednesday, the 14th of September, 1836, aged eighty years, seven months, and eight days. On the Friday following, his funeral was celebrated. A large party of gentlemen — the Messrs. Swartwout, Major Popham, Judge Edwards, Mr. Davis, and several others reached Port Richmond, from the city, by an early boat, "to pay the last honors to Pompey," as one of them expressed it. In his last days, he had requested to be buried at Princeton, as nearly as possible at the feet of his father and grandfather, the two presidents of the college, who lie side by side in its cemetery. His remains were accordingly conveyed to Princeton, accompanied by the gentlemen just named, and placed in the chapel of the college, where the funeral ceremonies were to be performed. An impressive and charitable sermon was preached on the occasion by the Rev. Dr. Carnahan, the president of the college; who, as president, resided in the very house which Colonel Burr's father had built ninety years before, and in which his gifted, erring son had been cradled. "The fashion of this world passeth away," was the text of the discourse. The Cliosophic Society, of which the youthful Burr had been one of the founders, voted to attend his funeral in a body, and to wear the usual badge of mourning for thirty days. A volunteer company of Princeton, called the Mercer Guards, escorted the remains of the old soldier to the grave, and fired over it the customary volleys. Most of the students of the college, and a large concourse of the people of the town witnessed with curiosity the closing ceremonial which consigned to the grave all that was mortal of Aaron Burr. Far, far, had he wandered from the ways of his fathers, to lie down at their feet at last.

The news of his death called public attention once more to his character and conduct; the newspaper comment upon

which was — what might have been expected. Absurdly false accounts* were given of his life and death, and the occasion was improved to point a great many morals, and to adorn a variety of tales. One or two papers in this city that ventured to say a few (injudicious) words in praise of the dead lion, were sharply called to order for the same by his old, but gen erally honorable foe, the *Evening Post.* When the Magazines came to review his memoirs, a few months later, the strife seems to have been which should heap upon his grave the greatest amount of obloquy. The *New York Review* and the

* As a specimen of the newspaper stories still in circulation respecting Burr, take the following, which has probably appeared in fifteen hundred newspapers of the United States, besides a large number in England and Scotland. As it is destitute of even the slightest foundation of truth, *some body* must have sat down and deliberately manufactured it. It has usually been credited to the *Presbyterian Herald:*

"There were some facts connected with the closing scenes of Mr. Burr's life which were told to us soon after they occurred, by one who received them from an eye witness, which we do not now remember to have seen stated any where in print. We suppose that we will not be considered as violating the privacy of the domestic circle in referring to them at this remote period after their occurrence.

"During Mr. Burr's last illness, he was very restless and impatient toward those who were about his person, often indulging in profane and abusive language. His physician, observing that mortification had commenced in the extremities, thought it his duty to inform him of the fact, and to assure him that whatever preparation he might wish to make for death, should be made at once. In as gentle tones as he could command, he broached the subject, assuring him that within twenty-four hours, at the farthest, he would be a dead man. Mr. Burr, 'Doctor, I can't die. I shan't die. My father and mother, and grand-parents, and uncles and aunts, were all pious and godly people; they prayed for my conversion a thousand times, and if God be a hearer of prayer, he is not going to let me die until their prayers are answered. It is impossible that the child of so many prayers will be lost.'

"The doctor replied, 'Mr. Burr, you are already dying.' He then went over pretty much the same expression as given above, and sank into a stupor, and soon slept the sleep which knows no waking until the morning of the resurrection. We may not have given the precise language used by him, as years have elapsed since it was reported to us. Our informant received the impression that he had run the rounds of his iniquity, all the while indulging the hope that, like the celebrated Augustine, before he died he would be converted, in answer to the prayers of his pious parents and friends."

Democratic Review were unsparingly and bitterly severe. The *North American Review* was gentler and fairer; but gave him little quarter.

One poetical tribute was paid to his memory by his last Friend. It never saw the light, and has lain twenty-one years in the blank book of the authoress unread. It was addressed

"TO ONE WHOM THE WORLD REVILED.

"To thee no widow told her woes
And found them unredressed;
To thee no shivering orphan came
But found a home and rest:
And many — would they truth reveal —
Have on thy bounty fed,
Who, when thine hour of sorrow came,
The van of slander led.
Great spirit! some, who knew thee well,
Paid tribute to thy worth;
A few, who disregard the frowns
Of groveling sons of earth,
Around thee clung, in that dread hour
When friendship's balm is sweet —
The hour thou left this earthly bar
The world's great judge to meet;
That judge who knows each various spring
That moves the human heart,
Who gives to Death the victory,
But leaves the sting apart,
Who in the balance nicely weighs
Our deeds of good and ill,
Who knows our various faults and crimes,
But leans to mercy still.
Then warrior, rest! thy trial's o'er,
And naught of earth can touch thee more."

He left no available property. A few pictures, a few mementoes of his daughter, several cart-loads of law papers, some sacks of letters, a few articles of office furniture, and a quantity of well-worn clothes, were all that remained of the countless sums he had received in his long career. Several years after his death, however, a reversionary claim which he held to some property, fell to the lot of his only surviving daughter,

who was a girl eight years of age when he died. The last words he ever spoke to his friend were a request that she would look to the welfare of that child, and see, especially, that she was sent to good schools. That he should have made a will seemed, at the time, somewhat ridiculous to his friends — little dreaming that it would, in a few years, secure a considerable sum to his daughter.

As all in the life of Aaron Burr had something of strangeness and peculiarity, it is not surprising, perhaps, that a stone could not be placed over his grave except in an extraordinary manner. Some efforts were made, and some money was subscribed, soon after his death, to procure a suitable monument, but the project failed through the inattention of an agent. For nearly two years the spot where he lay was unmarked, when one morning it was discovered that a small, very substantial, and not inexpensive monument of granite and marble, had been placed, during the night, over his remains. The cemetery at Princeton is situated in a somewhat thickly-inhabited lane, and is overlooked, in every part, by people living upon its borders. The principal gate is kept locked. No one in the town saw the monument erected, or knew, or knows any thing whatever respecting it. Nor was there any stone-cutter in the vicinity competent to execute such a piece of work. No relative of Colonel Burr, nor any one of my numerous informants explains the mystery.

The person who did the pious deed is known, however, and lives. Need I say, that to a woman's liberal hand Burr owes the stone that commemorates his name? In an inclosure of the cemetery, wherein lie the honored remains of the early Presidents of the College of New Jersey — Burr, Edwards, Davies, Witherspoon, and others — stands a block of marble, bearing the following inscription:

AARON BURR:

Born February 6th, 1756.
Died September 14th, 1836.

A COLONEL IN THE ARMY OF THE REVOLUTION.

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES FROM 1801 TO 1805.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

OTHER FACTS, AND SOME REFLECTIONS

"WHATEVER happens," Burr used to say, in jocular allusion to the largeness of his head, "my *hat*, at least, is safe. for nobody else can wear it."

His head was large, and very peculiar. A few hours after his death, a cast was taken of it, for the well-known phrenologists, Messrs. Fowler and Wells, of New York, who still exhibit in their cabinet the original cast. In the most striking manner it confirms the view taken of the character of Burr in this volume.

There are, probably, few intelligent persons now in the United States who doubt that phrenology is *among* the means by which a knowledge of the character of a man may be obtained. Unconsciously or consciously, we have, most of us, fallen into the habit of using the language of phrenology, and looking at one another with the phrenologist's eye. Charlotte Brontë, in describing her characters, frequently used language precisely similar to that employed by a professional phrenologist. Note this example from the *Professor:* "I wonder that any one, looking at that girl's head and countenance, would have received her under their roof. She had precisely the same shaped head as Pope Alexander the Sixth. Her organs of benevolence, veneration, conscientiousness, adhesiveness, were singularly small; those of self-esteem, firmness, destructiveness, combativeness, preposterously large. Her head, sloped up in the pent-house shape, was contracted about the forehead, and prominent behind." More or less, we all talk so of the people we look at with attention. Every observant person that

has ever lived must have been instinctively a phrenologist, as well as a physiognomist.

It is believed by moralists, and *known* by phrenologists, that no man is bad from necessity. The best organizations need culture, and the very worst, by culture, can be rendered, first, innoxious, then beneficent. Phrenology has to do chiefly with the raw material of character — the stuff it is made of. It has nothing to say of the circumstances, the beliefs, the influences, which nourish one class of organs, leave others dormant, and so insensibly "mold the character." Let no one, therefore, view the annexed account of the head of Aaron Burr as a justification of his errors; but merely as a statement of his natural quality and tendencies, which it was the office of Education to correct, and of Reason to control.

A fact should be mentioned in elucidation of one of the phrenologist's observations. There was a remarkable predominance of the feminine element in the *Edwards* stock. Timothy Edwards, the father of Jonathan, and, therefore Burr's great-grandfather, had eleven children, of whom ten were daughters Jonathan Edwards had eight daughters and three sons. Of the grand-children of Timothy Edwards, about two thirds were daughters. And now the phrenologist tells us, that Aaron Burr himself had the temperament of a woman.

The following statement was made by Mr. L. N. Fowler, who knew nothing of what I had written or discovered respecting Aaron Burr, and of whom I asked only the unrelenting truth:

"PHRENOLOGICAL CHARACTER

OF

AARON BURR,

DEDUCED FROM AN ORIGINAL CAST OF HIS HEAD.

"The physiological organization of Aaron Burr was distinguished for very fine texture and a great degree of susceptibility, intensity, and ardor, caused by a predominance of the nervous temperament, with a very active condition of the ar-

terial system. In fact, all the organs and functions of his constitution were remarkably active, and the circulation must have been unusually quick and free.

"There was not so much of the bony and muscular system as to be an impediment to his activity, yet there was a sufficient degree of the motive temperament to give strength and tenacity of organization. He was of small size, and well proportioned, but the brain was large for the body; hence he was characterized by mental, rather than by physical ability. Such was the harmony between the functions of the body as to indicate unusual health, vivacity, and power to endure without premature exhaustion. His temperament was more peculiarly that of a woman, joined to the mental qualities of the masculine.

"His Phrenological developments were marked and peculiar, and gave him a strong individuality of character. His head was of rather large size, and fully developed in most parts. The hair, at the time of his death, being almost gone, left his head nearly bare, so that the cast taken after death indicates the real development of the organs, and thereby affords a most valuable study.

"His intellectual development shows that all the perceptive organs are prominent; which, with his temperament and susceptibility, gave him an unusual degree of observation, accuracy of perception, ability to accumulate knowledge, and capacity to bring his powers to bear directly upon the subject in hand, or object he wished to effect. He had a wonderful memory of every thing he saw, of places, faces, and proportions. His mechanical eye must have been remarkably correct, which, joined to Locality, Individuality, and Weight, gave him ease and grace of motion, extraordinary powers as a marksman, and good judgment of the qualities and conditions of things. His memory of events, sense of order and arrangement, perception of colors, ability in figures, and love of music, were comparatively good. His sense of Wit was decidedly prominent, and he had uncommon power to use his mirthful emotions, in appreciating the ridiculous, or wielding the weapons of satire appropriately and readily.

"The reasoning organs were rather large, but somewhat inferior to the perceptions. The strength of the reasoning faculties was made to appear conspicuous, in consequence of his clearness of perception, sharpness of analysis, facility of expression, policy of arrangement, and power to illuminate his own side of a subject, and to magnetize his hearers into an acceptance of his opinions and an adherence to his cause. The intellectual faculties, as a whole, gave him superior influence over other men, not only in consequence of the great activity of his mind, but the peculiar power he had to use his knowledge and talents to advantage. His Language was large, which enabled him to communicate his ideas, and tell what he knew. He was copious and pertinent in speech, full and free in his powers to explain, and decidedly easy and off-hand as an orator. This quality, connected with his ready memory, power of analysis, and fervor of mind, gave him great influence over others in conversation. He had an eye of peculiar brilliancy and fascination, and when, from under his finely arched, perceptive brow, he bent his burning gaze upon a person, his words seemed like potential oracles, and gave him peculiar power over those whom he wished to sway.

"His executive faculties were all strong. His head being decidedly broad about the ears, gave him an unusual degree of force, resolution, energy, spirit, and courage, amounting at times to audacity, and a feeling of intense severity when excited. His Alimentiveness appears to have been only average in development, which, if not perverted, would have allowed him to live a sober and temperate life. Acquisitiveness not being specially large, he was doubtless generous, liberal, and free in the use of money, caring for it more to expend than to lay up. Secretiveness was large, which imparted tact, power of concealment, and ability to manage, and led to adroitness, and even cunning and duplicity; but Cautiousness not being large, he was liable to be indiscreet and impulsive, and when acting on the spur of the moment, and in a state of excitement, he would be rash and impetuous. He could plot well, but could not execute safely. His acts may have been done in secret, but so done that they would ultimately be exposed.

"His moral brain, was, in some respects, strong, and in others weak. His head, as a whole, was high, but contracted on the top. He had a full development of Benevolence, which gave him sympathy and generosity of feeling; and this benevolence, in the absence of influential Acquisitiveness, would lead him to be decidedly generous hearted in the use of money. He was urbane, kind, and ready to render service. His Veneration was large, which must have had power to check his passions, and lead him to be mindful of superiors, and also serve to give him a respectful and deferential address. His sense of nobility and aristocracy, and consciousness of superior power, was a prominent feature of his mind. Through the influence of Veneration, he could appear devotional, and thus inspire confidence in others, and lead them to trust to his honesty. He had very large Firmness, which gave him unusual determination of mind and disposition to carry out his desires and purposes, and which, connected with his Destructiveness, rendered him unusually efficient and vigorous in resisting opposition from others, and in overcoming obstacles. He had a good degree of Imitation, which, with his Benevolence, enabled him to adapt himself to others, and thus render himself easy and agreeable.

"Spirituality appears to have been very weak, which left his mind without much regard for such features of religion as depend on faith; hence he was skeptical, and a doubter. His Hope appears to have been large, giving enterprise, sanguine, speculative, and venturesome feelings, and a desire to engage in business of a hypothetical, prospective, and promising nature. He was not easily discouraged, but always confident of success. His Conscientiousness was moderate, and not strong enough to have a regulating influence on his mind. This faculty and Cautiousness, both being inferior, left his feelings without balancing-power; hence, while he lacked honesty, he had neither prudence nor circumspection — had not the restraining influence of the sense of danger nor of punishment. His impulses were developed at pleasure, and the various faculties gratified as they clamored for action. Whatever faculty was most excited for the time being, swayed

his mind as a whole; thus, the acts of his life were contradictory, and his character did not harmonize with itself. Had these two faculties of prudence and honesty been more prominent, he would have been able so to regulate his conduct as to have made almost an entire change in his whole life and character.

"The crown of his head was very high, showing large Self-esteem and Approbativeness, indicating pride, dignity, consciousness of self-importance, ambition, desire to please, and to gain distinction and fame. Such a mind, connected with such ambition, could not be contented in private life, nor bear to be repulsed, put down, or superseded by others; for such pride, joined with such sensitiveness, produces a character which is easily wounded. He had a great discernment of character, and power to read the spirit and tone of another person's mind. He was exceedingly winning in his manners, through his politeness, ambition, self-complacency, blandness of manner, respectfulness of demeanor, and ready, available intellect, connected with that personal address and luster of eye which few men possessed.

"He had large Continuity, which gave power to apply the mind to one subject, and to think closely and connectedly; and he was much indebted to this persistency of mind for his success in scholarship, in his profession, and in politics.

"His social brain was unevenly developed, and should have been a peculiar point in his character, and given eccentricity to the affections. He lacked local attachment; was naturally inclined to travel, and loved the variety and excitement which new places and scenes presented. He had not consistent and permanent love, nor was he uniformly interested in children, as such; and though sons would excite his ambition, a beautiful daughter would awaken far more affection. He had but little Adhesiveness; was not a permanent friend, and could not be relied upon in this respect. He may have been ardent and sincere for the time being, but change of scene and society would equally affect his attachments, unless they were fortified by other considerations. His attachments were more

extended and influenced by ambition, than confiding and domestic in their character.

"His Amativeness was very large, and very sharply developed in the head, indicating great intensity, power, and activity. This must have been one of the leading features of his character. The relationship between his mind and woman; the power he exerted over her, and the intense passion he manifested for her, are in strict harmony with his organization. The love-passion was inordinate, which, connected with his other peculiar qualities, must have given him a winning power and captivating influence over woman seldom equaled. With his very high tone of organization, he was not so likely to become vulgar and gross in this feeling so as to yield to the lower forms of its gratification, as would one of a coarser organization with the same development of Amativeness. He would always be the gentleman, and seek associates among the cultivated and refined. With the exception of the excess of this faculty, and that of Destructiveness, and the weakness of Conscientiousness and Cautiousness, his organization was comparatively unexceptionable; and, but for these defects, he might have been one of the most brilliant characters that ever figured in the pages of American history. Seldom do we find so much executiveness, ambition, manliness, strength of purpose, intuition of mind, natural eloquence, polite address, and ability completely to magnetize and captivate others, as his organization indicates."

Thus, the phrenologist.

Add, mentally, to his statement, that Aaron Burr was left an orphan in his infancy; that he was brought up by a well-intentioned, severe, ungenial Puritanic relative; that he was reared in a religion which did not engage his affections, nor satisfy his intellect, and which, therefore, did less than nothing for his moral nature; that he was educated in the Voltairian, Chesterfieldian period, so quickening to the intel lect, so lulling to the conscience; and that his early military career kept in the most vigorous exercise, for four or five years, all the strong executive points of his character, and left in comparative inaction those prudential and higher moral qual

ities which most needed strengthening. Consider, too, how the circumstances of his life seemed to compel him to be always *giving*, so that, at last, he appeared to have quite lost the power of discriminating between the luxury of generosity and the duty of honesty. And then, think, how bitterly and long he expiated his errors, and how loftily he bore his misfortunes, and how superior he ever was to the weakness of self-vindication, and how many worse men than he have been borne triumphantly along to the close of their lives, and followed to the grave by the acclamations of a nation.

To judge this man, to decide how far he was unfortunate, and how far guilty; how much we ought to pity, and how much to blame him — is a task beyond my powers. And what occasion is there for judging him, or for judging any one? We all know that his life was an unhappy failure. He failed to gain the small honors at which he aimed; he failed to live a life worthy of his opportunities; he failed to achieve a character worthy of his powers. It was a great, great pity. And any one is to be pitied who, in thinking of it, has any other feelings than those of compassion — compassion for the man whose life was so much less a blessing to him than it might have been, and compassion for the country, which after producing so rare and excellent a kind of man, lost a great part of the good he might have done her.

The great error of his career, as before remarked, was his turning politician. He was too good for a politician, and not great enough for a statesman. If he had been brought up wisely, and then subjected to a hard early experience of poverty and toil, he might have acquired that moral quality which, in connection with his keen, ready intellect, and his tremendous propelling power, would have made him the greatest teacher of the young, that, perhaps, ever existed. Nature meant him for that. In the present condition of the schoolmaster's craft, degraded and paralyzed as it is by its connexion with the State, drawing its support from the people in the odious form of a tax, reducing a teacher to the level of a common office-holder, and making him the hireling of ignorant, or narrow, or dissolute trustees — it seems ridiculous to say of

any man that he might have been a great and brilliant instructor of youth! Yet that was precisely the vocation of all others that Aaron Burr would have excelled in, and would have chosen, if he had been as GOOD, as he was acute, kind, and energetic. He would have founded a school that would have done as much for the enlightenment of Man as Princeton has done for the advancement of a Sect.

As it was, he did the State some service, though they know it not. By being the first to turn to practical account the inherent weakness of our Constitution, by teaching the Democratic Party how to carry elections, by the invention of Filibustering, by giving the country and General Jackson a taste for south-western acquisition, thus marshaling events the way that they would go, he, at least, *accelerated* the history of his country. In the wrong direction, you will say; true, but it was the direction in which the country was destined to go, and go as far as the road led.

His duel with Hamilton had the effect, finally, of rendering the practice of dueling entirely odious in the northern States. That was a benefit. In suffering the consequences of that affair, he simply expiated the sins of his generation, and the expiation fell, not unjustly, upon him. *He* ought to have known better, and, knowing better, he had the fortitude to bear the scoffs of cowards. He was, upon the whole, I am inclined to think, a better man than Hamilton; and it was well ordered, that by being the survivor, he should have had the *worst* of the encounter.

It is to be said in praise of Burr, that in the various offices held by him, he acquitted himself well. He was an indefatigable and useful Senator; a Vice-President of ideal excellence. If he had been elevated a step higher, his Washingtonian habit of taking the best advice before finally deciding upon an important measure, would have prevented his making serious mistakes. He would have been a good President. Instead of plundering the treasury of his country, as Hamilton predicted, he would have been more likely to spend twice his income in supporting the "dignity" of the office, and to have passed from the White House to the court of bankruptcy.

If his expedition had succeeded, it was in him, I think, to have run a career in Spanish America similar to that of Napoleon in Europe. Like Napoleon, he would have been one of the most amiable of despots, and one of the most destructive. Like Napoleon, he would have been sure, at last, to have been overwhelmed in a prodigious ruin. Like Napoleon, he would have been idolized and execrated. Like Napoleon, he would have had his half dozen friends to go with him to his St. Helena. Like Napoleon, he would have justified to the last, with the utmost sincerity, nearly every action of his life.

We live in a better day than he did. Nearly every thing is better now in the United States than it was fifty years ago, and a much larger proportion of the people possess the means of enjoying and improving life. If some evils are more obvious and rampant than they were, they are also better known, and the remedy is nearer. Every one begins to see, with more or less clearness, that the public business can never be well done until it is done upon the principles which make private business safe and profitable. The spectacle of an intelligent community throwing itself, every few months, into a violent, expensive, and demoralizing agitation of the question Who shall keep the public books? is felt to be irrational and ridiculous. By degrees, the truth becomes apparent that the thing to be done is to take all the offices out of politics, and to introduce into all branches of the public service the principles of permanence and promotion for merit alone, upon which the people conduct their own affairs, and without which no private establishment could exist.

Politics, apart from the pursuit of office, have again become real and interesting. The issue is distinct and important enough to justify the intense concern of a nation. To a young man coming upon the stage of life with the opportunities of Aaron Burr, a glorious and genuine political career is possible. The dainty keeping aloof from the discussion of public affairs, which has been the fashion until lately, will not again find favor with any but the very stupid, for a long time to come. The intellect of the United States, once roused to the consider-

ation of political questions, will doubtless be found competent to the work demanded of it.

The career of Aaron Burr can never be repeated in the United States. That of itself is a proof of progress. The game of politics which he played is left, in these better days, to far inferior men, and the moral license which he and Hamilton permitted themselves is not known in the circles they frequented. But the graver errors, the radical vices, of both men belong to human nature, and will always exist to be shunned and battled

APPENDIX---1864.

I.

A CURIOUS POLITICAL REVELATION.

The fidelity of Burr to his immediate comrades and adherents was returned by an equal fidelity on their part to his fallen fortunes. As late as 1806, two years after the fatal duel, the "Burrites" were still so considerable a party in the State of New York, that the Clintonians thought it worth their while to open a negotiation with them for a restoration of harmony in the republican party. That De Witt Clinton himself favored this negotiation is certain; though, whether he sanctioned the proposal for the return of Col. Burr to New York, and his restoration to his former position in the republican party, will always be doubted by the admirers of Clinton. The evidence relating to the negotiation is, of course, flatly contradictory. I shall, therefore, give a brief account of it in the language of the leading persons concerned, as printed in the letters of "Marcus" and "Philo-Cato," collected and published in a pamphlet in 1810.

March 31st, 1806, Col. John Swartwout, Burr's strenuous and unwavering friend to the last, published a statement respecting the negotiation, of which the following is the material portion:

"In the latter part of December (1805), a gentleman of respectability informed me, that the leaders of the Clinton party evinced a solicitude for a reconciliation with the Burrites. About the same time, Mr. McKeen gave similar information to myself and other gentlemen, observing that General Bailey and other persons of equal standing in the party, had conversed

with him on the subject, and that the General wished an intercourse with me. I replied that I was in the habit of familiar intercourse with that gentleman, and if he desired to see me I could always be found. On the fifth of January (1806), I received a note from Gen. Bailey, requesting to see me in the evening. I accordingly waited on him, when he soon introduced the subject of a union of parties. I remarked that two points must be clearly understood before I could enter upon such conversations. *First*, that the friends of Col. Burr would never consent to abandon him; that, on political subjects, *his* friends were *their* friends, and *his* enemies *their* enemies. He answered that nothing of the kind was expected. *Secondly*, Do you act from authority, or simply as an individual? To be plain, Gen. Bailey, do these propositions come from Mr. De Witt Clinton, who is esteemed the chief of your party, or from yourself merely? He answered, they come from Mr. Clinton, who is desirous to meet you and your friends; to bury past animosities, and to re-unite on fair and honorable terms. Subsequent to this conversation, I met the General with other gentlemen of respectable standing in his party; and by his proposition in behalf of Mr. De Witt Clinton, *had an interview with that gentleman at General Bailey's house.*

"The particulars of these meetings I do not think necessary to repeat; I must, however, declare, that *the exclusion of Mr. Burr was never in the remotest idea suggested by any gentleman of the Clinton party with whom I conversed.* On the contrary, whenever his name was mentioned, it was in terms of the highest respect. Great solicitude was manifested, that the suit of Mr. Burr against the editor of the *American Citizen* should be discontinued. I observed, that none of Col. Burr's friends had such authority; and expressed a confidence, that the result of the suit would fully establish to the world his innocence of the charges exhibited against him.

"I will merely add, that in this negotiation, I explicitly understood the Burrites to be recognized as a distinct party, or rather, a distinct section of the republican party, and the re-union to take place on terms of entire equality. No ar-

rangements were made or contemplated but such as, in my opinion, were honorable to the Burr party, and not dishonorable to the Clintonians."

To this statement I add one of the letters of "Marcus," giving the terms of the proposed union, all of which were afterwards sworn to by Matthew L. Davis, and testified to by Col. Swartwout and Mr. Peter Irving. The letters of Marcus were addressed to De Witt Clinton. The following is the third of the series:

"To De Witt Clinton, Esq.— *Sir*: On the 11th of January (1806), as you well know, the terms of union between Burrism and Clintonianism were concluded, and they were as follows:

"*First*—That Col. Burr should be recognized by the union party as a republican.

"*Secondly*—That the editor of the *American Citizen* should desist from all attacks upon him or his friends; that he should advocate the union, if it became necessary, in his paper; and that he should not defend the Burrites as *returning* to republican principles, they persisting that they had never abandoned them.

"*Thirdly*—That the friends of Col. Burr, as it respected appointments to offices of honour or profit throughout the State, should be placed on the same footing as the most favoured Clintonians; and that their Burrism should never be urged as an objection to their filling those offices.

"*Fourthly*—That at the approaching election in April, the Burrites should have a portion of at least one third of the representatives of the city and county of New York in the State legislature.

"*Fifthly*—That De Witt Clinton should see that they (the Burrites) were accommodated to any reasonable amount they might require in the Manhattan Bank, and that he should actually procure for an individual in the course of the next week an accommodation in said bank of at least 18,000 dollars.

"Such were the conditions of the union as concluded on the

morning of the 11th of January. Mr. Swartwout having reported the result of his negotiations, it was their opinion that Gen. Bailey ought to repeat them to some other friend of Col. Burr. The General was noticed of this circumstance, and cheerfully assented. Accordingly, on the same day, about one o'clock, Mr. Mat. L. Davis accompanied Mr. Swartwout, by appointment, to the house of Gen. Bailey, where, in the presence of these two gentlemen he repeated the above terms as the basis of a reconciliation.

"On Monday, the 13th of January, the Manhattan Bank, in pursuance of the above arrangement, discounted, for the accommodation of a distinguished Burrite (Col. John Swartwout) a note of nine thousand dollars; and on Thursday, the 16th, another note of nine thousand dollars, for the accommodation of the same person, making the eighteen thousand dollars stipulated for in the fifth article.

"Other friends of Col. Burr were accommodated with smaller, but very considerable sums, who could not previously obtain *one cent* from the coffers of that institution.

"Having stated the facts to the 16th of January, with your permission, sir, I will make the application. If Gen. Bailey was not your authorized agent, acting with your knowledge and approbation, how did it happen, sir, that he should undertake to pledge the funds of the Manhattan Bank, of which he was not a director, for the accommodation of Mr. Burr's friends, to the amount of thousands of dollars; and that these promises should be faithfully performed? How did it happen, sir, that the General should, on the 11th of January, agree that a loan should be affected by that bank on the 13th for 9,000 dollars, and another loan on the 18th for an equal sum, and yet not be acting under your authority? But it does not stop here. The General pledged himself that you should procure discounts for other friends of Col. Burr, and they also were furnished in various instances, and it is believed, in every instance, applied for previous to the rupture. I repeat it; let it be recollected. Gen. Bailey was not a director of that bank. He had no control over its funds. You were a director; and you have your puppets there that you move as you please

The conclusion is irresistible. Gen. Bailey must have acted by your authority; and the man who asserts a contrary position, must stand convicted as a knave or a fool.

"One observation more and I close this number. If the facts which I have detailed respecting your directorship are unfounded, they are susceptible of refutation. The books of that institution are at your command. The Vice President of the company, James Arden, is of all tools the most contemptible. Procure his certificate to the contrary. I have stated the precise days of the week and of the month, and it would require but very little labour to make the reference; but this I know will never be done; for they are unanswerable truths which I have related.

"Having established that Gen. Bailey was your authorized agent, I proceed to show your duplicity towards your own party, and your perfidy towards the friends of Colonel Burr. Let those men designated Clintonians, particularly in the city of New York, carefully peruse my next publication, and if they retain one atom of laudible pride, one ray of self-importance, if they are not sunk and debased beneath the native dignity of man, they will spurn your future confidence, and no longer remain the miserable automatons of a treacherous chief. MARCUS."

In a subsequent epistle, Marcus relates that the union of the Burrites and Clintonians was cemented by a supper in the house of Gen. Bailey: "At the appointed hour," says Marcus, Col. Swartwout, Mr. M. L. Davis, and Peter Irving attended. Shortly after they were seated, Mr. Clinton's name was announced. He entered the room, to the astonishment of the congregated Burrites, accompanied by Ezekiel Robbins. This gentleman was conspicuous as an advocate of Col. Burr; but he had not been apprized by his friends of the reconciliation; they were, therefore, embarrassed. After a few minutes pause, Mr. Clinton explained. He stated that he had considered it his duty to call on Mr. Robbins, and to inform him of the happy termination of the contest between '*two sections of the*

republican party;' that, at his request, Mr. Robins had accompanied him home, from whence he had conveyed him in his (Mr. Clinton's) carriage to the house of Gen. Bailey. Such, sir, was your zeal at the commencement of the celebrated union to convene the friends of Colonel Burr, and to meet them."

The writer further stated that the *American Citizen*, edited by Cheetham, which had for five years previous been in the almost daily practice of denouncing or ridiculing Col. Burr, and his adherents now suddenly ceased to do so, and began to commend the Burrites. "No sooner," says Marcus, "was the *alliance* formed, than these men were complimented and panegyrized for their eminent services as republicans, and their inflexible attachment to their friend."

Marcus adds that De Witt Clinton, in a very short period, denied and denounced the alliance which he had seemed to favor or promote.

After the publication of the letters of Marcus in a Poughkeepsie newspaper, in January, 1807, De Witt Clinton published the following denial in the "Albany Register Extraordinary:"

"*A nefarious libel*, under the signature of Marcus, having been recently printed at Poughkeepsie, and industriously circulated in the southern parts of the State, with a view of wounding my feelings, and exciting unjust prejudices against me, I have directed prosecutions to be immediately instituted against the authors and publishers, and I pledge myself to my friends, that a judicial investigation will demonstrate the folly, the falsehood, and the malice of the charges exhibited against me.

"De Witt Clinton.

"Albany, Jan. 26, 1807."

This pledge was not redeemed. Suits were commenced against Matthew L. Davis, the author of the Marcus letters, and every effort was made by the Burrites to bring the mat-

ter to an issue immediately. Clinton excused himself from going into court on the eve of the election, and, in fact, never showed any earnestness in prosecuting the affair, and it was finally given up. Mr. Davis' circumstantial statement in reply to the charge, remains on the records of the Supreme Court, supported in all material points by the solemn declarations of John Swartwout and Peter Irving.

The whole truth respecting the proposed alliance between the Burrites and Clintonians, it is now too late probably to obtain. It is not credible, as before observed, that De Witt Clinton ever *meant* to favor the restoration of Aaron Burr to power and influence in the State of New York. How far he *seemed* to do so is shown in the extracts I have given. The real wish of the Clintonians, doubtless, was to gain over the Burrites, without assuming any share of the unpopularity of their exiled leader. All the Burrites, except Burr, would have been welcomed heartily enough by De Witt Clinton. Besides the odium that rested on the name of Burr, Clinton would have had to encounter in Burr a colleague as unmanageable as he was skilled in managing.

II.

NATURE AND TERMS OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN BURR, BLENNERHASSETT, AND ALSTON.—BURR'S REAL OBJECT.

The recent publication of the Blennerhassett Papers, by Mr. William H. Safford, throws light upon the Mexican scheme of Burr, and affords all the additional information on that subject we are likely to receive. The volume consists chiefly of

the correspondence and diary of Blennerhassett, including many letters and documents never before given to the world. These Papers appear to establish or confirm the following facts:

Burr's ultimate object was the throne of Mexico.

His preliminary object was the seizure and organization of Texas, from which he was to advance upon Mexico.

The purchase of the Bastrop lands on the Washita river was effected that he might have the means of immediately rewarding his followers, and of affording them a permanent rendezvous in case the main scheme were delayed. If the scheme proved abortive, those lands might be a sufficient compensation for the disappointed adventurers. In any case, the purchase served to veil the real object.

There is no evidence at all in these Papers that Burr meant to sever the Western States from the Union, or desired to do so, nor that he intended to seize New Orleans or any property in it.

The means relied upon by Burr for effecting his object, were, 1. the concurrence and aid of the British government; 2. Money raised in the Eastern States among relations and friends; 3. the credit of Joseph Alston, his son-in-law, worth a million dollars, but temporarily embarrassed by the failure of crops; 4. Gen. Wilkinson and his troops, who were to invade Texas and bring on hostilities; 5. A host of young adventurers from New York, South Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Kentucky, and New Orleans, of whom, perhaps, five hundred were prepared to start at the signal, and a thousand more were willing to follow if they were provided with the means; 6. the priests of Texas and Mexico who were dissatisfied with the political situation in those countries, and were disposed, as Burr thought, to give him their countenance and aid—as they have since done to Louis Napoleon.

The distribution of honors and places in the conquered state appears to have been agreed upon: Aaron I., emperor. Joseph Alston, chief of the grandees, and, perhaps, secretary of state. Theodosia, chief lady of the court and princess-

mother of the heir-presumptive. Aaron Burr Alston, heir-presumptive. Wilkinson, general-in-chief of the army, and "second to none but Burr." Blennerhassett, minister to the court of St. James. Truxton (perhaps) lord high admiral of the fleet.

In such enterprises the grand difficulty is to raise the money indispensable to the starting of them: for the men who are willing to stake their all upon the issue have, usually, not much to stake. Burr was a bankrupt, Blennerhassett had expended sixty thousand dollars upon his island, and had not capital enough left either to work his land or live in his house. Before he ever saw Aaron Burr, he had been trying to sell and to rent his island, and meant to attempt to practice at the bar, or go into business. When the Mexican project was proposed to him, he jumped at it with the greatest avidity, but he had no available funds to invest. The few thousand dollars (not more than eight thousand in all) which he contrived to raise, he had to borrow. Alston gave him a verbal assurance, that, whatever might be the result of the enterprise, he should not be a loser by it. Alston told him that his estates in South Carolina were worth two hundred thousand guineas, and that he was willing to pledge the whole of it to the fulfilment of his engagement. The Papers show that Col. Alston did all in his power to make his promise good. He was prevented from immediately doing so by the failure of his crops, and by the embargo, which destroyed the market for rice. There was a period of five or six years during which rice plantations could neither be worked to advantage, nor sold, nor mortgaged. There is every reason to suppose, that Alston was a man of honor, and that he faced the consequences of his adventure boldly and handsomely. His entire loss in the affair appears to have been not less then fifty thousand dollars. He finally paid Blennerhassett a sum, which, it could be demonstrated, covered the loss he had sustained by his connection with the enterprise.

The defection of Wilkinson caused the explosion of the scheme. After the explosion, Alston wrote a public letter to the Governor of South Carolina, declaring his ignorance of

any design on the part of his father-in-law to attempt anything hostile to the United States. That letter was as follows:

JOSEPH ALSTON TO CHARLES PINCKNEY, GOVERNOR OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

OAKS, February 6, 1807.

DEAR SIR:—I have received and read the President's Message with deep mortification and concern; but the letter annexed to it, stated to be *a communication in cyphers* from Col. Burr to Gen. Wilkinson, excites my unfeigned astonishment. I solemnly avow that, when that letter was written, I had never heard, directly or indirectly, from Col. Burr, or any other person, of the meditated attack on New Orleans; nor had I any more reason to *suspect* an attack on that place, or any other part of the United States, than I have at this moment to suspect that our militia will be fortwith ordered on an expedition against *Gibraltar*. On the other hand, I had long, had strong grounds for believing that Col. Burr was engaged by other objects, of a very different nature from those attributed to him, and which I confess the best sentiments of my heart approved. I need not add that those objects involved not the interests of my country. Without adverting to that integrity of principle, which even my enemies, I trust, have allowed me, can it be supposed that a man situated as I am—descended from a family which has never known dishonor, happy in the affection and esteem of a large number of relations and friends, possessed of ample fortune, and standing high in the confidence of his fellow-citizens—could harbor, for an instant, a thought injurious to the country which was the scene of those blessings? The supposition would be monstrous. No, sir; it was but a short period before the impression became *general*, that apprehended the *possibility* of Mr. Burr's intentions being hostile to the Union; and the moment which gave birth to that apprehension, gave birth to the resolution which became a citizen. I confess, however, there are times even now, when, in spite of the strong facts which have been exhibited, I am almost inclined to believe my suspicions injurious. Whatever may be thought of the heart of Mr.

Burr, his *talents* are great beyond question, and to reconcile with such talents, the chimerical project of dismembering the Union, or wresting from it any part of its Territory, is difficult indeed. I traveled through a part of the western country, during the last summer, and have no hesitation in saying, that either of those projects would have been as much reprobated there as in the Atlantic States. With respect, however, to the communication annexed to the President's Message, which occasions you the trouble of this letter: after my solemn assurances to you that I had never given Col. Burr, or any other person, the smallest reason to imagine that I could be induced to engage in any project against my country, it would be infinitely satisfactory to me, could I explain to you, with the same *certainty*, the *motive* which led him to introduce my name as he did. But here, unfortunately, all is conjecture. Two motives only suggest themselves. He imagined, perhaps —which, by the way, he has no right to do—that his influence would be sufficiently great to induce my assent, and thought, therefore, he might as well consider it already obtained; or, which is more probable, he might have imagined, that by the apparent concert *of a number of persons from different States a stronger impression would be made on his correspondent.* Considerable *effect*, too, was, no doubt, anticipated by Mr. Burr's discernment from the perfect *self-confidence* which would have been manifested by his taking with him his *daughter*, receiving my co-operation, and thus embarking in the scheme the fortunes of his infant *grandson*, the only relative, except his daughter, that he has. But whatever the *motive* which drew from Col. Burr the expressions contained in this letter to Gen. Wilkinson, *facts*, *incontrovertible facts*, prove that he had no authority for making them. His daughter *did not go with him;* the navy of the United States *is still faithful to its duty;* Commodore Truxton, I am told, at the very moment he was said to have gone to the West Indies, *was in Philadelphia*, which I know not whether he has ever left; and I, instead of following with *a corps of worthies, am now at my usual residence, where I have been ever since the adjournment of the Legislature* peaceably directing the plowing

of my rice-fields, and preparing my lands for the ensuing crop. This is conclusive. A conspirator against the happiness and liberties of his country would have been, at this moment, very differently employed. Conspirator! the blood burns my cheek as I write the word. But I meant to confine myself simply to the disavowal I have made you, of a single action or word hostile to my country. To feel even that disavowal necessary is sufficiently painful; I have yielded, however, to circumstances, and made it. My unequivocal manner of making it, I trust, will not leave a doubt upon one candid or honest mind. Still I am aware that the common interchange of good offices with a man with whom I have been long nearly connected, may have given rise to circumstances which, however innocent in themselves, malignity will delight in distorting, and the illiberal among my political adversaries exult in disseminating. I am aware that there will be men base enough, for you and I have, *not long since*, seen proofs of it, to whisper even the circumstance of my connection, by *marriage*, with Col. Burr, as a circumstance warranting *suspicion*. About the opinions of *such* men I am indifferent. To the more ingenious and better part of my fellow-citizens, of whatever sect or party, I can solemnly repeat, as I have done to you, sooner would I have perished than harbored a thought subversive of the liberties, the happiness, or the integrality of my country. Let me always be judged by *my own acts*, and I shall be satisfied. If Mr. Jefferson or Gen. Wilkinson ever find anything to urge against me, let it be adduced. My residence is well known, and I shall never shrink from investigation. Nay more, *presumption*, where I can not refute it by *positive proof*, shall be received as *good evidence*, and the slightest *suspicion* which I can not *satisfactorily* explain, shall be admitted as *guilt*.

I remain, my dear sir, with much respect and regard,
Yours always, JOSEPH ALSTON.

Col. Alston states in this letter that Theodosia did not go with her father. Alston and his wife joined Burr at Blennerhasset's Island, in October, 1806, and went as far with him

as Lexington, Kentucky, where, I believe, they remained until the defection of Wilkinson was known. It is not probable that they intended to accompany him in his first descent upon Texas. It is not even certain that their return to South Carolina was hastened by the failure of the scheme. Burr, it appears, was offended by Alston's letter. So was Blennerhassett. But before the implicated parties met at Richmond for the trial, good feeling was restored between them. Burr seems to have convinced Alston that the cipher letter upon which Wilkinson based his charge of treason, was falsely interpreted by Wilkinson; for we find Alston writing thus to Blennerhassett, January 22, 1807: "Col. Burr feels that he has not the smallest grounds of resentment against me; he is perfectly satisfied; nor does there exist a shadow of that animosity between us that you deprecate. The fact is, from not having a view of the whole ground, you have judged precipitately and erroneously of my error, in giving faith to the letter attributed to Col. Burr by Gen. Wilkinson. I have long been satisfied from several quarters. Nothing but the shape, apparently so unquestionable, in which it came, could have gained it credit with me for a moment. These things, however, will shortly be put to rights. As soon as the trial, now pending at Richmond, is over, the event of which, I am persuaded, can not but be favorable, Col. Burr will be with us."

At Richmond, Blennerhassett became estranged both from Burr and Alston. He wanted money immediately for the support of his family. He had advanced to Col. Burr, according to his own statement, $2864, and had lost by endorsing for him $4000 more. "Alston," he wrote, "is endeavoring to raise money here to meet all the demands, the success of which I shall learn to-day or to-morrow, but little depend upon. On failure of this, he, Alston, will assume the whole, payable one-half a year from next January, the remainder the January following, with interest. The impossibility, he declares, to raise money in Carolina, by sale or mortgage, and his having *fewer negroes* than his *estates require*, make this the best arrangement he can make; but which, I fear,

will not be accepted." And again, a few days after, "He offered to assume all the demands upon me, if the creditors will accept one-half, payable with interest, next January twelvemonth; the other half, etc., the January following. But my children's property is, and will be, irrevocably sacrificed in the mean time."

Ready money to satisfy Blennerhassett's claim Alston could not then raise. Blennerhassett next applied to Burr, whose inability to pay was complete. "I have imagined," wrote Blennerhassett in his diary, "a method of forcing Burr's exertions to raise money for me, which is the most likely to succeed. It is founded on the principle of effecting through his vanity and interest what it is now evident I should in vain seek through his justice or generosity. I will hint to him my ability to introduce him into the first circles in England, by introductory letters; at the same time, showing him my expectations of becoming soon possessed of a large fortune in Europe, from which, I doubt not, I shall be enabled to engage his best endeavors, if not his warmest interest. This plan I shall put in execution to-morrow, of which I will note the effect upon him. Leaving it to ripen in his meditations for a week, I shall then open my present distresses to him in detail, and present him with his account. It is a little painful, I own, to feel oneself obliged to bring even a bad man into the path of his duty by artifice. But the details of the manœuvre, when examined, will, I trust, do me no discredit with my friends."

Blennerhassett soon tried his sagacious manœuvre. Burr having mentioned his purpose of going to Europe to renew his designs upon Mexico, Blennerhassett embraced his opportunity. "I now told him," he says, "that I had been reflecting on the application he had lately made to me for letters to England, to assist the better means he no doubt possessed of establishing his intercourse with the best society in that country. I regretted that through the fluctuations of parties there, I had no acquaintance with any member of the administration. But I had thought of three noblemen, with whom I had been at school at Westminster, and there inti-

mate with them all, though I had never since met with any of them, except Lord Sackville, who had visited me in Ireland. To Lord S., therefore, I could write, and also to Lords Elgin and Courtenay. The latter I was very intimate with at school; and the former, I presumed, from the circumstance of his having been not long since ambassador at the courts of Petersburgh and Constantinople, must be much respected by the present ministers, if not in office with them. To all these personages, I said, I thought I could properly address a mere letter of introduction, which if it would not of itself produce the end proposed, would not fail to do so when supported by the appearance he would make in London, the address with which he would be as impressive there as here, and the distinguished rank he lately occupied in the American Government. The effect of this communication was rapture. The whole man was changed. With all his studied reserve, he could not restrain his transports, which agitated his countenance and his movements far more than the news of a capital prize in the lottery could have done. I now, after pausing a little, to give his reflections time to recover his usual composure, asked if he remembered a hint I had sometime since given him, that I entertained some expectations of hereafter becoming easy in my circumstances, and perhaps wealthy. "Yes," he hastily replied, "very well." I then alluded to a communication by letter from a friend in Ireland, which I would now acquaint him with, and from which I might expect, if my prospects should be realized, possibly to meet him in those circles in Europe, into which I proposed to introduce him; now drawing from my pocket A. Martin's letter of 16th of last May, which luckily contained no other matter than that I wished him to see, and some political news. I presented it to him. He read it deliberately, over and over, and now beheld myself established in an influence upon his *feelings*, and a consideration from his notice, to which I am persuaded I had never before possessed the least title. Heyday! behold the wretched and beggared Blennerhassett about to rise out of the misery in which I have plunged him, and his unhappy family, into wealth and consequence. The heir,

too, of a nobleman! His new wealth and his dignified connections must supply me with better materials for my projected speculations than all others I have hitherto collected. His connexions and his purse shall lay the foundation under which I will *again* bury his credulity and rear upon it my aggrandizement. I am persuaded all this, and probably much more to the same purpose, entered and pervaded the mind of this arch-financier, with the velocity of light, in an instant. Be it so. Let him outwit himself. He shall have my letters to the British noblemen, and may make his own use of them, if he will first exonerate me from Miller's demand, and pay or secure the balance he owes me before we part. Otherwise, we break upon a *writ*, and for every thing I fear not his address in future."

The manœuvre did not succeed. Burr could not raise the money, and, probably, did not try. When the trials were over, Burr and Blennerhassett went to Philadelphia, where they both lived in considerable state, at the Mansion House, the most expensive and fashionable hotel in the city. There, Blennerhasset proceeded in a manner more direct, and formally handed in his account. "He treated me," reports Blennerhassett, "not as a faithful associate, ruined by my past connection with him, but rather as an importunate creditor invading his leisure or his purse with a questionable account. The time, therefore, has fully arrived, at which I should determine whether I should attempt to secure upward of $7000 for my family, or sacrifice it to an absurd and amphibious character of an associate and confidant in his views to future projects, without principle or object, and destitute of all means to promote them. Under these reflections, patience now became exhausted, and to procrastinate any longer now appeared treason to my family. I therefore set seriously about the task I had allotted myself for this morning. I found him alone, and had not been ten minutes with him, after he had discharged a shop-boy, with whom he had been trifling, I know not how long, about some article of dress, before he asked me if I had heard of Mr. Luckett's treatment of him? On my answering in the negative, he informed me

that Luckett had sent a marshal to him yesterday, and obliged him to give bail to the amount of about $16,000, Luckett's claim, I suppose, being about half that sum. This intelligence mortified me, as it convinced me, I had lost time. I expressed my concern for this new embarrassment he had experienced, as it might narrow his means to satisfy other claims which he did not consider questionable, like Luckett's. He asked me upon this, what claims I alluded to? I said it was with great regret I should mention my own; namely, the amount of the account I had furnished him with in Richmond, and my claim for his protested draft held by Miller, with my indorsement for $4000, on account of which my property on the Ohio had been sacrificed to four times the amount. Now, had you seen how 'that eye of his did from its lustre fly,' you would have beheld a little man indeed. He was dumb and motionless; but he soon recovered his accustomed affectation, and asked, what was the amount of my account, declaring he had never looked into it since I had handed him it. I said it was a small one, obviously meaning by comparison with most others he had settled or secured. 'A pretty *small* one,' he replied, 'of only about $3000;' and said, he had not *yet examined* it. This sneer, at the amount of my account, and the questioning of its fairness, by referring it to examination, which he falsely said he had not given it; for he looked it over the evening I presented it at Richmond, asked a question or two on some of the items, which I answered, informing him I had vouchers for most of them, which he said he did not want to see, and was satisfied it was correct; such a diminution of that suavity of address, with which he had already too often diverted me from my purpose, now exhibited him a heartless swindler in the last swoon of his disorder, and determined me to hasten my departure. I suppose I testified my feelings sufficiently by my looks and manner, without removing his doubts of the impression this treatment made upon me, by now telling him, as I did, that my time and expectations were exhausted, and I should stay in Philadelphia no longer; that I perceived he could give me no hopes of money, which I did not expect, but that, though I

was contented to starve myself, I must secure something for my family, since I knew he had found means in that way to accommodate every other creditor which was all that detained me in town. He now pretended he had nobody he could call upon. I observed, I thought it very possible he might never return from Europe, in which case my family must have a security to resort to in this country. To this remark he had the kindness to reply, 'that when I said my family, I meant myself, and that I knew all his friends.' 'You do,' said he, 'Mr. Blen*na*hassett'—so he has frequently pronounced my name before, when he has got beyond self-management. 'Sir,' said I, 'I must insist upon it, I do *not* know all your friends." Upon this contradiction, he begged my pardon, and said he really thought he had informed me of all who were his friends in that city."

Finding that nothing could be got from Burr by artifice or remonstrance, Blennerhassett "broke with him," by bringing a suit against him for the amount of his claim, which suit, as well as many others, Burr eluded by his secret flight to Europe.

Col. Alston, soon after, paid Blennerhassett the sum of $12,500, which, it could be shown from Blennerhassett's own words, was a full compensation for his losses. He was not satisfied, however. During Col. Burr's absence in Europe, he made an attempt to procure a large sum of money from Col. Alston by threatening, in case he refused, to publish a book in which the full history of the Mexican scheme should be given. Alston was then Governor of South Carolina, and Blennerhassett supposed that an exposure of the nature of his connection with Burr would bar his further progress as a politician.

BLENNERHASSETT TO GOV. ALSTON.

LA CACHE, PORT GIBSON, MISS. TERR., March 2d, 1811.

SIR:—As a letter from me, after so long a suspension of our correspondence, will probably be as little welcome as expected,

I anticipate, on inditing it, only such attention on your part to its object as your reflections may deem consonant to your interest. I proceed accordingly, without further preamble, to apprise you, that having long since despaired of all indemnity from Mr. Burr for my losses, by the confederacy in which I was associated with you and him, I count upon a partial reimbursement from you upon grounds and motives which it is the object of this letter to develope and to recall to your recollection. Having mentioned Mr. Burr, I wish you, sir, to observe, that I shall never more consider a reference to his honor, good faith, or resources in any other light than as a scandal to any man offering it who is not already sunk as low as himself. You will therefore feel, I hope, as little disposed to speak, at this day, of his intentions as of his means to indemnify his friends. It is on you, sir, that as regards myself, devolves this duty. The heroic offer you made to co-operate with your person and fortune in our common enterprise, gave you, in my estimation, a color of claim to that succession in empire you boasted you would win by better titles—your deeds of merit in council or the field. For examples of these exploits, I anxiously invoked the season of their achievement; but I confess, sir, I attached a more interesting value to the tender you so nobly pledged of your whole property to forward and support our expedition, together with your special assurances to me of reimbursement for all contingent losses of a pecuniary nature I might individually suffer. These considerations, sir, as they involved me on your responsibility, naturally refer me to you for the acquittal of it, and possessing such ample powers to discharge it, I flatter myself I shall be able to induce you to the full exercise of them. To this end I now apprise you, that the period has arrived in which I feel myself warranted to tell you, that in virtue of your oral and written assurances to guarantee me against all injuries to my property by reason of my participation in the confederacy of 1806, I finally determined to embark with you, and have thereby sustained damage to the amount of $50,000, of which sum I now demand $15,000, payable at New Orleans or Philadelphia, in August next. The respective sums you have paid

already in part discharge of your written obligation, I believe, $12,500, together with the $15,000 now required, will leave a balance of $22,500, which you may, if you please, adjust by your obligation, on receipt of which, if required, I will dismiss my demand against Mr. Burr by suit in Philadelphia.

Here, sir, you perceive, is a demand instituted on the guarantee of the good faith of a gentleman, who can never plead specially thereto but out of a court of honor. Within that jurisdiction, he must acquiesce or rely on the general issue. Your adjusting this affair in the manner proposed, I would, at a certain period of our acquaintance, have suffered no man to question; but the cruel, cold-blooded indifference with which you have so many years beheld a distressed family, in vain endeavoring to collect some fragment of the property embarked and wrecked in the voyage you had insured, without acquitting the debt of your guarantee—such a demeanor, sir, naturally obliges me, as a further and final result of all my labors and deliberations that relate to you to submit to your reflections, other motives of action besides those already offered. These are certainly of a character and complexion I regret it should be my lot to exhibit to the public. To you, however, it belongs to say whether they shall remain shrouded within the sanctuary of your own breast, or stalk forth the heralds of the private treason and public *perjury* they will proclaim infallibly to the honest Democratic electors of South Carolina, who would thence remove you from the chair of their assembly with a different kind of zeal from that through which they placed you in it. Yes, sir, I submit it to your discretion, to keep concealed from your friends and from your country that led you to take part in our confederacy, which you pledged yourself to me to back with all your property, worth, as you stated, 200,000 guineas, to join and support us at New Orleans, at the head of 2,000 to 3,000 men, to leave with me, besides your oral and written guarantee of indemnity for all my losses, a private cipher, the inscrutable vehicle of our correspondence; afterward, to commit the *shabby treason* of deserting from your parent by affinity, and your *sovereign* in *expectancy;* and then, finally, in your letters to your

Governor, to vilify your father-in-law, and perpetrate an open perjury by publicly denying all privity or connection, with his views or projects. Assuredly, sir, a picture of this kind, on which I have occasionally worked during the last four years, can not, you must imagine, be viewed by your Democratic friends with less horror than a death's head in a phantasmagoria; and yet, after all my labors, I feel no wish to exhibit it to vindicate my character in associating with Mr. Burr and yourself in the judgment of the mobility of the low people, or to appease the impotent vindictiveness of Mr. Jefferson and his miserable partisans. The fact is, I have survived all the labors of body and mind imposed upon me by the evil genius of Jefferson and of Burr, except the remaining one of exposing both.

But I must bequeath to my children and friends a memorial of that honor, loyalty, and courage, to which you and I made our first offerings on entering into the association, but which you did not follow with me in the expedition; such a remembrance, containing sketches of Mr. Burr's cabinet and correspondence with myself and other associates; the history of my interviews and consultations with Mr. Alston, relative to Mr. Burr's designs upon New Orleans and Mexico, with ample references to *letters* and other rare and original documents, that will be lodged in Charleston or Philadelphia, for the inspection of the curious,—the whole, sir, is now ready for the press, but shall not be sent away for publication until you shall have failed to announce your compliance with the engagements of honor herein required of you, by forwarding a credit for $15,000, payable as before mentioned, and accompanied with your obligation, or some other equivalent proposal, for adjusting the balance. Now, sir, to conclude, you may gather from what you have read, that I hold myself bound by no obligations of secrecy to any one who has broken faith with me, provided the disclosure work no injury to an innocent third person. That you may have full notice, I have no objection, in apprising you of the nature and design of the proposed publication; but to give you an opportunity of keeping it out of view, by discharging the debt of honor you have con-

tracted, whereby, in doing an act of justice, you will prevent the necessity of my selling to the public that detail of infamy and falsehood which you should exclusively purchase; that your past experience of my principles and temper will guarantee the sincerity of these sentiments, and to exemplify this assurance, I promise you, that whether the demand I have made upon you be complied with or not, I will, at any time after publishing my book, which shall be suppressed or expedited by your determination, promptly attend to any call you may think proper to make upon me.

I have to add, that I have no doubt of my book's producing $10,000, if you do not think proper to prevent its appearance. Should you decide in the negative, you may rest assured I shall not, to save the trouble of *smelting*, abandon the ore I have extracted, with such expense of time and labor from the mines, both dark and deep, not, indeed, of Mexico, but of Alston, Jefferson, and Burr. I send, besides the original, a duplicate and triplicate of this letter; namely, one directed to Columbia, one to Charleston, and the third to Georgetown. This is done with a view, by lessening the chances of my letters miscarrying, to expedite your answer, for which I shall wait double the time necessary to bring it to me in the regular course of the mails.

I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

HARMAN BLENNERHASSETT.

This letter excited the disgust and the contempt of the Governor and his wife. No answer was returned to it, but Blennerhassett did not execute his threat. Still unsatisfied, the unfortunate man, after the return of Col. Burr from Europe, made another attempt upon the fears of the Burrites. He wrote to Burr, offering to relinquish his suit against him, and withhold his threatened book, if the remainder of his claim should be paid.

"My losses," he wrote, "Gov. Alston may have stated to you, I estimate at $50,000, of which his Excellency has already reimbursed, I believe $12,500, and it is very probable

nothing short of the publication of my book, hitherto postponed only by sickness, will bring me any part of the balance so long sought in vain from his honor and engagements. His well-earned election to the chief executive office of his State, and your return from Europe, will, however, now render the publication more effective than it would have been prior to these events, and it will be expedited within three months from this date, if all other means of indemnity fail within that period. I would still agree to accept from any other source $15,000, in lieu of the balance I claim of $37,500, and, of course, withhold the book, which is entitled, 'A Review of the Projects and Intrigues of Aaron Burr, during the years 1805–6–7, including therein, as parties or privies, Thos. Jefferson, Albert Gallatin, Dr. Eustis, Gov. Alston, Dan. Clark, Generals Wilkinson, Dearborn, Harrison, Jackson, and Smith, and the late Spanish Ambassador, ———, exhibiting original documents and correspondence hitherto unpublished, compiled from the notes and private journal, kept during the above period by H. Blennerhassett, LL. B.;' with this motto, which will find applicability in every page in the book: 'It is only the Philosopher who knows how to mark the boundary between celebrity and greatness.'

"You will now, sir, I hope, perceive distinctly upon what terms I would execute a general acquittance to Gov. Alston and yourself. I have long since abandoned every chance of reimbursement from either of you, unless I should succeed in forcing the object through the alarms of his Excellency, or the fears and interest of other characters."

Whether Burr took any notice of this letter, does not appear. Blennerhassett, soon after, went to Ireland, where he passed the residue of his days in tolerable comfort on the bounty of his relations. His book never appeared. Mr. Safford, however, by the publication of the "Papers," on which it was to be based, has now given the world all the information which Blennerhassett himself possessed. Neither Burr nor Alston could have been harmed by any disclosures which it was in the power of Blennerhassett to make.

III.

SWARTWOUT CHALLENGES WILKINSON.

An additional item of some interest we hear from the Blennerhassett Papers. At Richmond, Samuel Swartwout, Burr's confidential messenger and factotum, challenged Gen. Wilkinson to mortal combat. Wilkinson replied, that "he held no correspondence with traitors or conspirators." Whereupon, Mr. Swartwout published the following letter in the *Virginia Gazette:*

"To His Excellency Brigadier-General James Wilkinson. *Sir:*—When once the chain of infamy grapples to a knave, every new link creates a fresh sensation of detestation and horror. As it gradually or precipitately unfolds itself, we behold in each succeeding connection, and arising from the same corrupt and contaminated source, the same base and degenerate conduct. I could not have supposed that you would have completed the catalogue of your crimes by adding to the guilt of *treachery*, *forgery*, and *perjury*, the accomplishment of cowardice. But every succeeding day presents you in a new light to the public, and plunges you still deeper in crime and ignominy. Having failed in two different attempts to procure an interview with you, such as no gentleman of honor could refuse, I have only to pronounce and publish you to the world as a coward and poltroon. One word more before I take my leave. This is a critical moment in the life of your Excellency. Your reputation is gone for ever, and your life totters on the verge of dissolution. As you can not pretend to the esteem of any man living, you should have sought a momentary reputation in the applause of even your enemies. *You should have been* brave, and *died like a man.* Your enemies would then have forgotten the wrongs you had done

them. Your country would have been appeased, and even *Judas* forgiven. You should have considered that there is some small merit in even a villain's bravery; it was all you were supposed to possess this side of the grave. You should have made much of it; it might have served to wipe away some portion of the stain which your treachery and turpitude have fixed upon your character.

"S. SWARTWOUT.

"RICHMOND, October 21, 1807."

IV.

WASHINGTON IRVING AT BURR'S TRIAL.

IT is mentioned (p. 308 of vol. I), that the first writings of Washington Irving appeared in the *New York Chronicle*, a newspaper, edited by his brother, Dr. Peter Irving, in the interest of Col. Burr, who commended the essays of the young contributor. We now learn, from the Life and Letters of Mr. Irving, that he was retained as counsel for Col. Burr in his trial. It was not supposed, the biographer tells us, that the legal services of the young barrister would be of much value; nor, indeed, did Mr. Irving take any part in the proceedings of the court room. It was thought, however, that his writings in the journals might be of service in correcting public opinion; though it does not appear that his pen was employed. Washington Irving was a federalist, and an admirer of Alexander Hamilton, but, deeming Col. Burr a persecuted man,

he entered into his cause with the ardor of youth. The following are extracts from his letters written at Richmond:

To Mrs. Hoffman, June 4th, 1807. "You can little conceive the talents for procrastination that have been exhibited in this affair. Day after day have we been disappointed by the non-arrival of the magnanimous Wilkinson; day after day have fresh murmurs and complaints been uttered; and day after day are we told that the next mail will probably bring his noble self, or at least some accounts when he may be expected. We are now enjoying a kind suspension of hostilities; the grand jury having been dismissed the day before yesterday for five or six days, that they might go home, see to their wives, get their clothes washed, and flog their negroes. As yet we are not even on the threshold of a trial; and, if the great hero of the South does not arrive, it is a chance if we have any trial this term. I am told the Attorney-General talks of moving the Court next Tuesday for a continuance and a special court, by which means the present grand jury (the most enlightened, perhaps, that was ever assembled in this country) will be discharged; the witnesses will be dismissed; many of whom live such a distance off that it is a chance if half of them will ever be again collected. The Government will again be subjected to immense expense, Col. Burr, besides being harassed and detained for an additional space of time, will have to repeat the enormous expenditures which the trial has already caused him. I am very much mistaken, if the most underhand and ungenerous measures have not been observed towards him. He, however, retains his serenity and self-possession unshaken, and wears the same aspect in all times and situations. I am impatient for the arrival of this Wilkinson, that the whole matter may be put to rest; and I never was more mistaken in my calculations, if the whole will not have a most farcical termination as it respects the charges against Col. Burr."—*Life and Letters of Washingtou Irving*, I., 191.

To James K. Paulding.—*Richmond*, June 22, 1807. "I can appoint no certain time for my return, as it depends entirely upon the trial. Wilkinson, you will observe, has arrived; the bets were against Burr that he would abscond, should W. come to Richmond; but he still maintains his ground, and still enters the court every morning with the same serene and placid air that he would show were he brought there to plead another man's cause, and not his own.

"The lawyers are continually entangling each other in law points, motions, and authentics, and have been so crusty to each other, that there is a constant sparring going on. Wilkinson is now before the grand jury, and has such a mighty mass of *words* to deliver himself of, that he claims at least two days more to discharge the wondrous cargo. The jury are tired enough of his verbosity. The first interview between him and Burr was highly interesting, and I secured a good place to witness it. Burr was seated with his back to the entrance, facing the judge, and conversing with one of his counsel. Wilkinson strutted into court, and took his stand in a parallel line with Burr on his right hand. Here he stood for a moment swelling like a turkey-cock, and bracing himself up for the encounter of Burr's eye. The latter did not take any notice of him until the judge directed the clerk to swear Gen. Wilkinson; at the mention of the name Burr turned his head, looked him full in the face with one of his piercing regards, swept his eye over his whole person from head to foot, as if to scan its dimensions, and then coolly resumed his former position, and went on conversing with his counsel as tranquilly as ever. The whole look was over in an instant; but it was an admirable one. There was no appearance of study or constraint in it; no affectation of disdain or defiance; a slight expression of contempt played over his countenance, such as you would show on regarding any person to whom you were indifferent, but whom you considered mean and contemptible. Wilkinson did not remain in court many minutes."
—*Life and Letters of Washington Irving*, I., 194.

To Miss Mary Fairlie.— *Washington City*, July 7, 1807. "I have seen traits of female goodness while at Richmond, that have sunk deeply in my heart—not displayed in one or two individual instances, but frequently and generally manifested; I allude to the case of Col. Burr. Whatever may be his innocence or guilt, in respect to the charges alleged against him, (and God knows I do not pretend to decide thereon,) his situation is such as should appeal eloquently to the feelings of every generous bosom. Sorry am I to say, the reverse has been the fact—fallen, proscribed, prejudged, the cup of bitterness has been administered to him with an unsparing hand. It has almost been considered as culpable to evince towards him the least sympathy or support; and many a hollow-hearted caitiff have I seen, who basked in the sunshine of his bounty, when in power, who now skulked from his side, and even mingled among the most clamorous of his enemies. The ladies alone have felt, or at least had candor and independence sufficient to express, those feelings which do honor to humanity. They have been uniform in their expressions of compassion for his misfortunes, and a hope for his acquittal; not a lady, I believe, in Richmond, whatever may be her husband's sentiments on the subject, who would not rejoice at seeing Col. Burr at liberty. It may be said that Col. Burr has ever been a favorite with the sex; but I am not inclined to account for it in so illiberal a manner; it results from that merciful, that heavenly disposition, implanted in the female bosom, which ever inclines in favor of the accused and the unfortunate. You will smile at the high strain in which I have indulged; believe me, it is because I feel it; and I love your sex ten times better than ever. The last time I saw Burr was the day before I left Richmond. He was then in the Penitentiary, a kind of State prison. The only reason given for immuring him in this abode of thieves, cut-throats, and incendiaries, was that it would save the United States a couple of hundred dollars, (the charge of guarding him at his lodgings,) and it would insure the security of his person. This building stands about a mile and a half from town, situated in a solitary place among the hills. It will prevent his counsel from

being as much with him as they deemed necessary. I found great difficulty in gaining admission to him for a few moments. The keeper had orders to admit none but his counsel and his witnesses—strange measures these! That it is not sufficient that a man against whom no certainty of crime is proved, should be confined by bolts, and bars, and massy walls, in a criminal prison; but he is likewise to be cut off from all intercourse with society, deprived of all the kind offices of friendship, and made to suffer all the penalties and deprivations of a condemned criminal. I was permitted to enter for a few moments as a special favor, contrary to orders. Burr seemed in lower spirits than formerly; he was composed and collected as usual; but there was not the same cheerfulness that I have hitherto remarked. He said it was with difficulty his very servant was allowed occasionally to see him; he had a bad cold, which I suppose was occasioned by the dampness of his chamber, which had lately been whitewashed. I bid him farewell with a heavy heart, and he expressed with peculiar warmth and feeling his sense of the interest I had taken in his fate. I never felt in a more melancholy mood than when I rode from his solitary prison. Such is the last interview I had with poor Burr, and I shall never forget it. I have written myself into a sorrowful kind of a mood, so I will at once desist, begging you to receive this letter with indulgence, and regard with an eye of Christian charity, its many imperfections."—*Life and Letters of Washington Irving*, I., 201.

V.

BURR'S GENEROSITY TO VANDERLYN.

The story of Burr's meeting with Vanderlyn, which was given me as one derived from Burr himself, is thought to be, in some of its romantic incidents, incorrect. But the story does less than justice to Burr's generosity toward the artist. Having heard that a gentleman of Rondout, N. Y., had in his possession certain letters from Burr to Vanderlyn, I wrote to him respecting them. The annexed reply to my letter of inquiry contains new and valuable information:

"Rondout, N. Y., February 11, 1858.

* * * "Vanderlyn honored me with his confidence during the last five years of his life. I minuted, at his request, from his own lips, the principal events of his career. As is ever the case with the aged, the incidents of his earlier life were most vividly recalled. The circumstances of his first acquaintance with Colonel Burr, and the friendship and favor with which that eminent man honored him, were favorite subjects of discourse; and I recorded many anecdotes illustrative of the character of 'his best friend.' This but added to the strength of a conviction I had had for many years, that the popular idea of Burr's character was erroneous, and would be corrected in time. But to my purpose, which was to correct the anecdote as to Vanderlyn in your recent biography of Col. Burr. That is related by you, in the main, as it has been in circulation for many years. But it is an invention purely.

"Vanderlyn was born at Kingston, in 1775. His grandfather, a Hollander, was a portrait painter of decided talent, though he did not make painting a profession; his father had the same taste and bias; and from his earliest years John Vanderlyn showed the direction of his powers. The Vande-

lyn family were in comfortable circumstances and highly esteemed. John was educated at Kingston Academy, then an institution of high standing, and was quite a proficient in the classics. At the age of seventeen he passed a year in New York, and had, in a paint and color shop, and at an evening drawing-school, some very seasonable advantages. He turned his attention to oil painting the summer afterwards, copying at home two of Stuart's portraits lent by a friend, one being that of Col. Burr. This copy was purchased by the then representative in Congress from this district, who was a warm friend of Col. Burr, and who mentioned the fact to the Colonel at the session of 1795, the latter being then in the Federal Senate. 'Col. Burr never forgot anything,' as Vanderlyn frequently said, and he did not forget that his friend had spoken very warmly of the decided talent of the youthful painter. In the summer following, Vanderlyn, when at New York, received a note without signature, asking him to call at a certain place. He did so; it was the office of Col. Burr; and at the instance of J. B. Prevost, who was there, and who said the note was in the Colonel's handwriting, Vanderlyn proceeded to the residence of Burr, at Richmond Hill. The young artist was warmly met by Colonel Burr, became an inmate of his house for several weeks, fulfilling orders which came through his friend, and in the autumn of 1795 he was placed under the instruction of Gilbert Stuart, at Philadelphia.

"Vanderlyn remained with Stuart about a year, when the latter told Col. Burr he had taught him all he could, and said he was then ready for Paris. Col. Burr provided his young friend with the means; Vanderlyn went to Paris in 1796, remaining there between four and five years, and enjoying all the advantages of its admirable schools in art.

"The letters I have spoken of, some twenty in number, were written by B. to V. from Holland, whilst B. (1811) was endeavoring to get a passage to America. Vanderlyn was in Paris, whither he had gone a second time in 1804, and where he remained, save two years spent at Rome, till 1816.

"These letters do not seem to me to possess any value to a

biographer of Col. B., being simply on matters of business, showing a most scrupulous memory as to small debts he forwards money to V. to discharge, and a most cheerful and brave spirit under many adverse circumstances during the six weeks' detention and doubt in Holland. There are messages to some of his Parisian female friends in some of them, but all couched in the most delicate and respectful language. Without knowing aught of the writer, save that to be gleaned from these letters—chirographically as well as from their tone—one would set him down as a gentleman of education, elegant tastes and pursuits, somewhat a precisian in detail, of keen discernment and marked decision. There is certainly nothing to sustain the 'vulgar error' of Burr's utter libertinism in the slightest degree in any one of the series, and had this been his characteristic, I am certain from the relations between B. and V., it would have been shown in these confidential communications.

"I will add to this unduly long letter, that on the occasion of Burr's Parisian sojourn, (1810–11,) he assisted Vanderlyn pecuniarily, instead of the latter assisting him. Vanderlyn was always in straitened circumstances, and never more so than at that time. He was generous to a fault, but rarely had a louis which was not mortgaged ten deep. The 'Marcus at Carthage' was the only picture he ever exhibited at the Louvre, or indeed anywhere else in Europe; though he painted his 'Ariadne,' and made some remarkable copies from Correggio and other masters during his abode there.

"I have the honor to be, very respectfully yours,

"Robt. Gosman."

VI.

CIPHER USED BY COL. BURR IN HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH HIS DAUGHTER.

The late Mr. Charles Burdett, who was educated by Aaron Burr, published this cipher in an appendix to one of his works:

"Let the months be designate by the Numerals in their order, beginning with March according to the old calender thus—1-March, 2-April 3-May, and so on. Let the two first ciphers in every letter denote the date thus—22-1—would be 22d March; 19-8—would be 19th October. The common ciphers may be used to denote numbers, but so used, score underneath, thus, 2-66-59 would signify two hundred dollars.

These additions from 31 to 58 inclusive may or may not be used at pleasure; but from 27 to 30 must be used in the cases there particularly mentioned.

27–28—a
29–30—i, I
} To be used chiefly when these letters constitute a word by themselves, but may be used at pleasure instead of the cipher denoting these vowels—a, i.

31—and,

32—am, is, be, been, are, } The sense will show which of these is intended by the cipher 32, and so of the others which follow.

33—at, to,
34—do,
35—for
36—by, with,
37—but,
38—if,
39—in, into,
40—it, it's, (40'—it's,)
41—I, me, my, mine, myself,
42—no, not, none, nought, naught,
43—shall, will,
44—so,
45—on,
46—the,
47—us, we, ourselves,
48—this, these,
49—that, those,
50—they, them, themselves,
51—what, whatever, whatsoever,
52—which, whichsoever,
53—who, whom, whose,
54—nor, neither,
55—or, either,
56—would, could, should,
57—you, your, your's (57'—your's),
58—of, from.

59—dollars,
60—A. B.
61—J. Bt.
62—Mar,

63—Leper,
64—A. B. A.
65—Cn,
66—hundreds,
67—thousands,
68—Millions,
69—Gen. Prev.
70—Br. Go.
71—E. A.
72—Col. D. P.
73—Max God,
74—Sw. Go.
75—Fr. Go.
76—L'd Hol.
76s—Lad. Hol.
77—Mr. Canning,
78—Melvil,
79—He, she,
80—Have,
81—Had,
82—Lord,
83—Lady,
84—Mons.,
85—Mad.,
86—Miss,
87—Madison,
88—Lord Mulgrave,
89—Castlereagh,
90—Percival,
91—Portland,
92—Hawesbury,
93—Charles Williamson,
94—Achard,
95—Mallet,
96—Prevost,
97—Young Bentham,
98—Young Affleet,
01—him,
02—her,
03—may,
04—was,
05—with,
06—London,
07—Edinburgh,
08—Bath,
09—Dublin,
010—Paris,
101—Lord Justice Clerk,
102—Bartlett,
103—span,
104—Devis me,
105—Hope.

VII.

BURR AND TALLEYRAND.

An article in a leading magazine, severely condemnatory of Burr and his biographer, called forth a communication to the Boston Transcript, which, I think, will be read with interest:—

"Mr. Editor: I desire to call your attention to two points only in the article on Aaron Burr in the last number of the Atlantic. The writer says:

—"Burr, on his arrival in Paris, in 1810, sent to Talleyrand and requested an interview. The French statesman could not well refuse to receive an American of such distinction, with whom he was personally acquainted, by whom he had formerly been hospitably entertained, and told the gentleman who brought the message, 'Say to Col. Burr, that I will receive him to-morrow; but tell him also, that General Hamilton's likeness always hangs over my mantel.' Burr did not call upon him. —

"The writer, I presume, is too sagacious to attach much importance to this anecdote. When Pinckney first arrived in Paris as Minister to France, Talleyrand desired his secretary to ascertain if he had ever written a book, and, if he had, to procure a copy of it, if possible. His secretary ascertained that Pinckney *was* the author of a work, which he succeeded in procuring. Talleyrand hastily run over a few pages, made a few remarks, and turned down a leaf or two in it, and then placed it in his book-case. When Pinckney called upon the great intriguer, he was shown into the library, where he was left alone long enough to discover what the book-case contained of particular interest to him. When Talleyrand appeared, he welcomed the American Minister in his most fascinating manner, and, after some general conversation, took occasion to speak of the great pleasure he had derived from the book of Pinckney's, which he was fortunate enough to possess. This flattering reception was not dictated by any particular respect Talleyrand felt for the American Government, for he had told the Directory that 'the United States were of no more consequence than Genoa;' but it was probably done to smooth the way towards the obtaining from the American Minister, for his own private pocket, that snug little sum of one or two hundred thousand dollars as a bribe for his services,—which sum he afterwards so strenuously, but unsuccessfully, insisted upon.

"It is easy to imagine how sincere and profound an admira-

tion for Hamilton a man of Talleyrand's character must have felt! His disinterested admiration for anybody was very slight. If Hamilton's likeness was over his mantel, it is safe to infer that it was only put there to assist in cajoling some friend or admirer of that great statesman whom Talleyrand was desirous of using. The same low cunning that prompted the mean book flattery to Pinckney, must have suggested the sham of 'the likeness on the mantel.' Such a conclusion is inevitable from the well known character of the arch intriguer. Talleyrand does not want to see Burr because the latter could not serve him in any way, and he may have been a little afraid of him because they were very much alike in many respects. But I very much doubt if it was the likeness over the mantel which kept Burr from calling—the word *but* was sufficient. If Talleyrand had told the gentleman, 'Say to Col. Burr, that I will receive him to-morrow, *but* tell him also that Gibbs the pirate's, or Cæsar's likeness hangs over my mantel,' it would have been all the same. Burr would not have called. It was the most convenient way the crafty statesman could devise for saying, 'I know your capacity and boldness, Col. Burr, but see no way in which they could be made serviceable to me, and you might harm me, therefore I will keep you out of the way.'

"I am no defender of Aaron Burr; he was in many respects a bad man; but very great harm is done in representing men to be worse than they are."

VIII.

BURR'S EXPULSION FROM ENGLAND.

A CONVERSATION upon the compulsory removal of Col. Burr from England in 1809, occurred in the House of Lords, to the following effect:—

"*Earl Grey* rose to ask the noble Viscount opposite a question on the subject of the bill (alien bill), on the discussion of which they were about to enter. In reply to some observations made on a former night, the noble Viscount had stated that no American had ever been sent out of the country under the alien bill; and also that no difficulty had occurred as to the question whether the American *antenati* were aliens or not. He (Earl Grey) had then stated not from his own knowledge, but from very respectable authorities, that an American had been sent out of the country under the alien bill, and that that American was Col. Burr. The noble Viscount was not at that time able to say positively, whether that was the case or not, but had said he would inquire. He wished to know whether that inquiry had been made, and how the matter stood?

Lord Sidmouth said, that the noble Earl's statement had not been correct; for on looking at the records of the office he found that Col. Burr had not been sent out of the country under the alien act.

Earl Grey.—Then he must have been misinformed on that point; but he wished to know whether any proceedings had taken place with respect to Mr. Burr, and whether any difficulties had in the course of proceedings arisen on the question to which he had adverted?

Lord Sidmouth stated that Mr. Burr had come to this country, and passed under a feigned name; that he changed his name, and passed under another feigned name; that government conceiving that he might have had some improper object in

view, apprehended him under the alien act, but that no difficulty had arisen in the case. Government were convinced that he had no improper object in view. He demanded passports for Sweden, received them, and went out of the country. He afterwards returned and desired passports for America, which were granted. He was not sent out of the country under the alien act, and no difficulty had occurred.

Lord Holland.—Was there no question whether he was an alien or not?

Lord Sidmouth.—I did not say that there was no such question, but there was no difficulty.

Earl Grey could not conceive how it was possible that, when Burr was apprehended under the alien act, no difficulty should have occurred. Even on the noble Viscount's own statement difficulties must have occurred, at least so it appeared to him, and the best mode of settling the question would be to produce the proceedings as to Burr from the records of the office. It was a strange doctrine for English lawyers to maintain that there was no necessity for their knowing the subject upon which they were to legislate.

Lord Sidmouth repeated his statements as to Burr, and said that on his return to this country he had applied for a license for residence, and voluntarily submitted to the alien laws. There was, therefore, no difficulty in his case.

Earl Grey asked whether Burr had not, on the ground of his being born in English allegiance, objected to his deportation, as it was called, for this was no English measure and no English name?

Lord Holland asked whether Burr had not applied to be naturalized, and had not been informed that he could not, as he could not say that he was born out of British allegiance?

Lord Sidmouth said, he knew nothing about any such circumstance.

Lord Holland observed that they ought to be cautious about passing an act to put power into the hands of those, who, when questioned as to the manner of execution, had no answer to give, but that they knew nothing about the matter.

Lord Sidmouth would say nothing as to the candor of the observation; but the proceeding as to Burr took place in 1809, when he was not in the office of the home department; but even if he had, he might not be able at once to recollect every separate proceeding.

IX.

BURR AND JEREMY BENTHAM.

Publications have been made tending to show that Jeremy Bentham had the worst possible opinion of Col. Burr. One writer represents Bentham as saying, in 1825, that "by Burr's own account of the duel with Hamilton I thought he must be a cold-blooded and atrocious ruffian." The same writer observes, that Bentham admired Burr's talents, but "shuddered when he spoke of his principles." Evidence exists which shows that Jeremy Bentham, besides giving him in England every possible proof of friendly regard that one man can give another, remained his friend after his return to America, corresponding with him in the most familiar and confidential manner. I append one of Bentham's letters to Burr, written four years after they had parted for ever. The letters, "Q. S. P.," which occur several times in this epistle, stand for Queen's Square Place, the ancestial residence of the philosopher:

Bentham to Burr.

London, Q. S. P, February 23, 1816.

"I am still alive; I hope you are. I am in good health and spirits; I hope, by this time, so are you. I promised to

write to you from hence. Not two days together has my promise been ever out of my mind. But when or how to fulfil it? Once I was setting about it, then came a report that you were dead. True or not true, but t'other day I heard that the report was at any rate groundless, so now I take my chance.

"Some time ago, three or four American books came to me from you with a letter. I took it kindly of you, this remembrance; but grievous was my disappointment at not finding Blodget among them. Ever since your departure I have been trying in vain to get it. Don't you trouble yourself, however, about it now; for I have doubtless the means, viz., by a nephew of Cobbett, who, with a friend, is going to set up a printing-office at Philadelphia. Is it not principally for reprinting his weekly periodical work (Political Register) as it comes out?

"Grievous was my vexation at not being able to do, but in so imperfect a manner, what you seemed so desirous of in relation to the return of some of your letters. Just at that time there was, in the room of your friend Ann, a very stupid female. At the same time that I missed those letters of yours I missed some papers of mine, the loss of which was very distressing to me. I do believe the creature took them to light fires with. She was soon after packed off, and Ann reinstated in her place, where she still continues.

"The time is extremely short. I know not what I shall be able to send you of things of mine printed. You saw everything, small or imperfect, stopped by some incident or other, some coincidence or another, for I have always, unless it be for my own amusement, too many irons in the fire. I have at least got one spare copy of that thing which you were so eager to have another copy of, in addition to the one you said you had lost. I do not know whether I will send it to you. I would if I was sure of your giving it publicity there. But how can I when I am not sure of your being alive? and perhaps, by this time, if alive, you may be not only grieving or wincing for the one thing needful, but indifferent to everything else. I looked to see your name at the head of some of the

heroes assisting the Spanish Americans, and, not finding it, I concluded that ——— had put empire out of your head.

"When you left me I was, as I apprehended, at the eve of a comparative ruin; singing nos dulcia linquimus ava, nos patriam fugimus, meaning Q. S. P., though after disappointments many and grievous, here I am, in a state of comparative prosperity, in loved Q. S. P., as whilom.

"In Devonshire, Ford Abbey, not as boarder, but as housekeeper, and have furnished a house uniting antique with modern magnificence; garden picturesque and luxurious; servants, viz., for the gardens, for so small a person, numerous; neighbours cordial, though unvisited; Barrow Green a doghole to it. Tormentors at the Abbey half the year, Mr. and Mrs. Mill with their five children; at Q. S. P., H. Koe and his wife, a very amiable person (reading everything I write or read), with a child upon the stocks.

"Gallatin, when here, expressed a desire to see me. They told him he could not, as I saw nobody. Hearing of this, I called on him. He told me he considered me as his master in the art of legislation. I told him of my wish to codify for the United States or any of them. He told me how the land lay in that respect in the different States, and of a scheme he had had for that purpose, and taken steps toward the execution of it. Pennsylvania (where his own property is) he mentioned as being one of the likeliest. I asked him whether he had any objection to say in black or white, to persons capable of forwarding the matter, every part of what he had been saying viva voce. None whatever; thereupon he sent me a letter, highly recommendatory, for me to send to Snyder (or some such name, no time for turning to papers), then governor. Asking him about books giving an account of United States finances. He knew of none published, but he happened to have a spare copy of some official one, never published. He had taken it to Russia, and would have left it there could he have found any men there capable of profiting by it, and he has found one. It was with his papers at Ghent, and from thence he would sent it to me. Along with his letter I sent to Snyder a copy of every work of mine I could procure from

ony of my friends, most being either out of print or unpublished, together with a letter stating conversations between myself and Gallatin. The books went from some port in this island. Not being able to find any conveyance for the epistles, viz., J. Bentham to Snyder and Gallatin to J. Bentham, H. Koe, when I was at the Abbey, addressed it to Gallatin, with a letter, saying he could find no other more promising mode of conveyance. Of this letter, when he was afterward in London (I in London likewise), he acknowledged the receipt to Romilly (whose letter I now have on the subject) and others, but *never did.*

"As to the not sending the finance papers, he said that, after the burning of Washington, there might perhaps be a demand for the spare copy for the service of the State, under which circumstances it was not proper he should part with them. This seemed reasonable. But how he came to shy me, and leave me thus in the dark, I cannot imagine. The packet for Gov. Snyder; did he open it, take out his own letter, read mine, in which I had said nothing of his conversations with me that was not strictly true, nor had he enjoined secrecy about any one thing? Had the state of affairs in Philadelphia undergone any change? Would he ask ministerial people about me, and accept vague vituperation as true character, and true for the purpose of extinguishing such a scheme? By-the-by, I think (yes, I certainly did) I mentioned to him my scheme of codifying for Russia, and obtained permission from him to make some letters of his to me subservient to it.

"Never did I meet with any man in appearance more respectable and trustworthy. I brought him to Mill, and Mill was quite charmed with him. From Romilly, Dumont, &c., he could not have heard of anything but what would have justified any confidence he could have had occasion to repose in me.

"Some eight or ten months ago, Prince Adam Czartoriski applied to me to assist Poland in codification. It was then, and till very lately, universally understood that he was to be viceroy; and in his conversation, though he did not say so, it

seemed to be implied. Before this I had written to the Emperor Alexander, offering my services in this line on condition of their being altogether gratuitous.

"After I had seen the prince came a gracious answer, in the emperor's own hand, accepting my offer, saying he had sent orders to his people to consult me, and desiring my acceptance of a 'souvenir.' In a letter to a friend of mine, which I saw, Count Capo d'Istria, who was then in attendance about him, said the souvenir was a 'baque de prix.' In a long answer, I sent him back the ring in the packet as it came, with the imperial seal unbroken, telling him that, after what I had said, I could not accept of anything in any shape, and that, in comparison of such a letter from him, all such things as rings were without value in my eyes.

"As to his people consulting with me, I was sure they would do no such thing; that the man he meant (Rosenkampt), I did not name him, was jealous, and would turn pale at my name. That he might be fit for collecting materials, but was but too well known to be useful for anything better. That what he ought to do was to invite competition, and I showed him line after line of a scheme which had cost about 200,000 roubles a year in salaries without producing any benefit. He might establish at Petersburgh or Warsaw, or in both places, a permanent school of legislation with scarce any expense. Of this letter I sent a copy to the prince, telling him I knew very well he was in earnest, and glad I should be to find other people so too. From Czartoriski I did not expect an answer till his viceroyalty was settled. About a month ago, being at my hobby-place, came newspapers, with a list of sub-potentates appointed at Warsaw, and, instead of Czartoriski, a man that nobody had ever heard of. A man with whom I am intimate, and whom I will not name for fear of accidents, knowing the person most perfectly, and knowing the whole matter, said he was not at all surprised. Every man who had ever placed any confidence in him was deceived by him. That his head and heart were upon par; not but that the fault lay most in the head. That the man who happened at the time to be at his elbow (he might have added,

or the woman, especially if an impostor, pretending to be a bigot), was at all times mover of his resolutions. And, to tell the truth, I had been seriously blamed beforehand for taking any sort of trouble on the supposition that any possible good could come out of him. But Czartoriski, I understood, was always at his elbow, and it was in him I put my trust.

"If Christomorthen comes to you (it will be fragmentical, it being now still on its way through the press), know that the princi al persons of name engaged are Brougham, Sir Mackintosh, and, I hope, Romilly, your friend A., &c. I will not be of the number of the managers, but Mill will, and others on whom he and I think we can depend for not spoiling it.

"I furnish ground for it which they could not get elsewhere, viz., a part of Q. S. P. garden, gratis, and some money besides. I have some thoughts of sending to Cobbett's own house a copy of Park, with a request to ask you whether you will procure from New York an engagement from any person to reprint it without profit or loss to me; and if you do by a certain time, then to send it you; otherwise to be at liberty to print it himself.

"Do what you will about Christomorthen, only do not mention any of the above names, the matter not being as yet settled. Great would be my satisfaction that you are still good for anything. I had little expectation for continuing so thus long, at my time of life; 68 the fifteenth of this month. My abbey has a court, in which I play every morning at fives (beating a boy of eighteen) instead of taking physic.

"I have in print some copies of my letter to President Madison; not yet distributed any of them, so much as to intimates. I know not whether it is exactly so as you saw it. I think I showed it (whether in print or manuscript, I forget) to Gallatin. I should have sent you a copy, but that I think of adding some account of my transactions with Gallatin, including his letter in my behalf to Governor Snyder, which he gave me open that I might see it, mentioning his name always with respect, but with expressions mingled with surprise and regret. Before I printed this letter to President Madison, I

sent it in manuscript, all but a page or two, to Lord Sidmouth, secretary for home department, who had been so openly declared a friend of Dumont's book. He acknowledged in black and white. Being a man of whom it is said that he does nothing of his own opinion, I think it not improbable that he may have hoped, with the rest of the humbugs, to whom I am in the highest degree obnoxious, for the injuries they and their predecessors have done me; and it is nothing but natural that they should have given it in charge to open everything of mine to the diplomatic men in all places.

"Gallatin could not but be aware of this. It is possible that he should have been efficiently influenced by vague vituperation, and not apply to any one of my friends to learn whether, if any vituperation was uttered, there was any ground for it? To my account of my transactions with Gallatin I shall probably add ditto with emperor and Czartoriski. Kosciusko, I am informed, is without hopes.

"If you are good for anything, try to set up Christomorthen at New York. Depend, in that case, on every assistance in my power.

JEREMY BENTHAM."*

X.

THEODOSIA PLEADS FOR HER FATHER.

IN addition to the letter to Albert Gallatin, Theodosia wrote to Mrs. Madison, asking the aid of her influence in behalf of the beloved exile. In other days, when Col. Burr was a sen-

* Private Journal of Aaron Burr, II., 447.

ator and one of the leaders of the Jeffersonian party, he had been particularly intimate with the young lady who afterwards became Mrs. Madison. Tradition reports that he was instrumental in bringing about the marriage, which made her the inmate of the presidential mansion. The following are the letters to Mr. Gallatin and Mrs. Madison:

THEODOSIA TO ALBERT GALLATIN.

OAKS, (S. C.), March 9, 1811.

"Though convinced of your firmness, still with the utmost diffidence I venture to address you on a subject which it is almost dangerous to mention, and which, in itself, affords me no claim on your attention. Yet, trusting that you will not withhold an opinion deeply interesting to me, and which your present station enables you to form with peculiar correctness, I venture to inquire whether you suppose that my father's return to this country would be productive of ill consequences to him, or draw on him farther prosecution from any branch of the government.

"You will the more readily forgive me for taking the liberty to make such a request, when you reflect that, retired as I am from the world, it is impossible for me to gather the general opinion from my own observation. I am, indeed, perfectly aware how unexpected will be this demand; that it places you in a situation of some delicacy; and that to return a satisfactory answer will be to exert liberality and candor; I am aware of all this, and yet do not desist.

"Recollect what are my incitements. Recollect that I have seen my father dashed from the high rank he held in the minds of his countrymen, imprisoned, and forced into exile. Must he ever remain thus excommunicated from the participation of domestic enjoyments and the privileges of a citizen; aloof from his accustomed sphere, and singled out as a mark for the shafts of calumny? Why should he be thus proscribed and held up in execration? What benefit to the country can possibly accrue from the continuation of this system? Surely it must be evident to the worst enemies of my father, that no

man, situated as he will be, could obtain any undue influence, even supposing him to be desirous of it.

"But pardon me if my feeling has led me astray from my object, which was not to enter upon a discussion with you. I seek only to solicit an enlightened opinion relative to facts which involve my best hopes of happiness.

"Present, if you please, my respects to Mrs. Gallatin, and accept the assurances of my high consideration.

"THEO. BURR ALSTON."

THEODOSIA TO MRS. MADISON.

ROCKY RIVER SPRINGS, (N. C.), June 24, 1809.

"MADAM: You may perhaps be surprised at receiving a letter from one with whom you have had so little intercourse for the last few years. But your surprise will cease when you recollect that my father, once your friend, is now in exile; and that the President only can restore him to me and to his country.

"Ever since the choice of the people was first declared in favor of Mr. Madison, my heart, amid the universal joy, has beat with the hope that I too should soon have reason to rejoice. Convinced that Mr. Madison would neither feel nor judge from the feelings or judgment of others, I had no doubt of his hastening to relieve a man whose character he had been enabled to appreciate during a confidential intercourse of long continuance, and whom he must know incapable of the designs attributed to him. My anxiety on this subject has, however, become too painful to be alleviated by anticipations which no events have yet tended to justify, and in this state of intolerable suspense, I have determined to address myself to you, and request that you will *in my name* apply to the President for a removal of the prosecution now existing against Aaron Burr. I still expect it from him as a man of feeling and candor, as one acting for the world and for posterity.

"Statesmen, I am aware, deem it necessary that sentiments of liberality, and even justice, should yield to considerations

of policy, but what policy can require the absence of my father at present? Even had he contemplated the project for which he stands arraigned, evidently to pursue it any further would now be impossible. There is not left one pretext of alarm even to calumny; for bereft of fortune, of popular favor, and almost of friends, what could he accomplish? And whatever may be the apprehensions or the clamors of the ignorant and the interested, surely the timid, illiberal system which would sacrifice a man to a remote and unreasonable possibility that he might infringe some law founded on an unjust, unwarrantable suspicion that he would desire it, can not be approved by Mr. Madison, and must be unnecessary to a President so loved, so honored. Why, then, is my father banished from a country for which he has encountered wounds and dangers and fatigue for years? Why is he driven from his friends, from an only child to pass an unlimited time in exile, and that too at an age when others are reaping the harvest of past toils, or ought at least to be providing seriously for the comfort of ensuing years? I do not seek to soften you by this recapitulation. I wish only to remind you of all the injuries which are inflicted on one of the first characters the United States ever produced.

"Perhaps it may be well to assure you there is no truth in a report lately circulated, that my father intends returning immediately. He never will return to conceal himself in a country on which he has conferred distinction.

"To whatever fate Mr. Madison may doom this application, I trust it will be treated with delicacy. Of this I am the more desirous, as Mr. Alston is ignorant of the step I have taken in writing to you, which, perhaps, nothing could excuse but the warmth of filial affection. If it be an error, attribute it to the indiscreet zeal of a daughter whose soul sinks at the gloomy prospect of a long and indefinite separation from a father almost adored, and who can leave unattempted nothing which offers the slightest hope of procuring him redress. What indeed would I not risk once more to see him, to hang upon him, to place my child on his knee, and again spend my

days in the happy occupation of endeavoring to anticipate all his wishes.

"Let me entreat, my dear Madam, that you will have the consideration and goodness to answer me as speedily as possible; my heart is sore with doubt and patient waiting for something definite. No apologies are made for giving you this trouble, which I am sure you will not deem it irksome to take for a daughter, an affectionate daughter, thus situated. Inclose your letter for me to A. J. Frederic Prevost, Esq., near New Rochelle, New York.

"That every happiness may attend you, is the sincere wish of

"THEO. BURR ALSTON.

"To MRS. JAMES MADISON, *Washington, D. C.*"*

XI.

THEODOSIA IN EXPECTATION OF SPEEDY DEATH.

Two or three years after the death of Theodosia, a trunk was sent from South Carolina to her father, containing articles which had belonged to her. Her husband never had the courage to open it, and, upon his death, it was forwarded to Col. Burr. In it was found a letter, written several years before, directed thus: "To my husband. To be delivered after my death, and before my burial." The following is a copy of the letter:—

* Knickerbocker Magazine for April, 1860.

August 6, 1805.

"Whether it is the effect of extreme debility and disordered nerves, or whether it is really presentiment, the existence of which I have been often told of, and always doubted, I can not tell; but something whispers me that my end approaches. In vain I reason with myself; in vain I occupy my mind, and seek to fix my attention on other subjects; there is about me that dreadful heaviness and sinking of the heart, that awful foreboding, of which it is impossible to divest myself. Perhaps I am now standing on the brink of eternity; and, ere I plunge in the fearful abyss, I have some few requests to make.

"I wish your sisters (one of them, it is immaterial which) would select from my clothes certain things which, they will easily perceive, belonged to my mother. These, with whatever lace they find in a large trunk in a garret-room of the Oaks house, added to a little satinwood box (the largest, and having a lock and key), and a black satin embroidered box, with a pincushion; all these things I wish they would put together in one trunk, and send them to Frederic, with the enclosed letter. I prefer him, because Bartow's wife would have little respect for what, however trifling it may appear, I nevertheless deem sacred.

"I beg Sister Maria will accept of my watch-ring. She will find a locket which she gave me, containing the hair of her mother; she had better take it. If the lace in my wardrobe at the Oaks will be of any use to Charlotte, I beg she will take it, or anything else she wishes. My heart is with those dear amiable sisters, to give them something worth preserving in recollection of me; but they know that a warm friendship is all I have to give.

"Return to mamma the eagle she gave me. Should an opportunity to Catherine Brown ever occur, send her a pearl necklace, a small diamond ring, a little pair of coral tablets, which are among my trinkets at the Oaks. I pray you, my dear husband, sent Bartow's daughter some present for me, and to himself and Frederic a lock of my hair. Return Natalie the little desk she gave me, accompanied by assurances

of my affectionate recollection, and a ring of my hair. Remember me to Sally, who is truly amiable, and whom I sincerely esteem.

"I beg, also, you will write immediately to New York, forwarding some money for the comfortable support of *Peggy* until my father can provide for her. Do not permit grief at the loss of me to render you forgetful of this, for the poor creature may expire of want in the mean time. I beg this may be attended to without delay.

"To you, my beloved, I leave our child; the child of my bosom, who was once a part of myself, and from whom I shall shortly be separated by the cold grave. You love him now; henceforth love him for me also. And oh, my husband, attend to this last prayer of a doting mother. Never, never listen to what any other person tells you of him. Be yourself his judge on all occasions. He has faults; see them, and correct them yourself. Desist not an instant from your endeavors to secure his confidence. It is a work which requires as much uniformity of conduct as warmth of affection towards him. I know, my beloved, that you can perceive what is right on this subject as on every other. But recollect, these are the last words I can ever utter. It will tranquillize my last moments to have disburdened myself of them.

"I fear you will scarcely be able to read this scrawl, but I feel hurried and agitated. Death is not welcome to me. I confess it is ever dreaded. You have made me too fond of life. Adieu, then, thou kind, thou tender husband. Adieu, friend of my heart. May heaven prosper you, and may we meet hereafter. Adieu; perhaps we may never see each other again in this world. You are away, I wished to hold you fast, and prevent you from going this morning. But He who is wisdom itself ordains events; we must submit to them. Least of all should I murmur. I, on whom so many blessings have been showered—whose days have been numbered by bounties—who have had such a husband, such a child, and such a father. Oh pardon me, my God, if I regret leaving these. I resign myself. Adieu, once more, and for the last time, my beloved. Speak of me often to our son. Let him

love the memory of his mother, and let him know how he was loved by her. Your wife, your fond wife,

"THEO.

"Let my father see my son sometimes. Do not be unkind towards him whom I have loved so much, I beseech you. Burn all my papers except my father's letters, which I beg you to return him. Adieu, my sweet boy. Love your father; be grateful and affectionate to him while he lives; be the pride of his meridian, the support of his departing days. Be all that he wishes; for he made your mother happy. Oh! my heavenly Father, bless them both. If it is permitted, I will hover round you, and guard you, and intercede for you. I hope for happiness in the next world, for I have not been bad in this.

"I had nearly forgotten to say that I charge you not to allow me to be stripped and washed, as is usual. I am pure enough thus to return to dust. Why, then, expose my person? Pray see to this. If it does not appear contradictory or silly, I beg to be kept as long as possible before I am consigned to the earth."

XII.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A LAWYER—STRIKING ANECDOTES.

THE following is a communication to the *Evening Post* of this city, which appeared in the early part of 1858:

"I am a member of the New York bar; and, about twenty years ago, my praxis was principally in Chancery. Colonel Aaron Burr sought me out—employed me to draw pleadings

and to move matters before the then Chancellor; my very nicety and particularity appeared to please him, for he was choice in expressions and particular in the position of sentences. He wanted me to become his partner; but judicious friends strongly urged me against it. He was always sensitive and prompt.

"On my first being closeted with him, I was struck with his serpent-like fascination. His head, eyes, and mouth, were so very snake-like. His habit in talking to you while he sat at a distance, was to have one of his long fingers extended, with which he really seemed to be feeling you all over, while his remarkably piercing small dark eye appeared to have a nail in it that fastened you. He always had queer people about him, whose free manners were a strange contrast to his measured correctness of deportment.

"I doubt his having packages of old letters about him at the time of death. I remember once being with him in what was known as the Aldermen's Room, at the City Hall, while the Chancellor was holding court. I pointed to the picture there of Washington by the side of a white horse, and observed that Washington must have been a handsome and remarkably well-formed man. 'He was no such thing, sir,' said Burr; 'Washington never stood for that portrait; he, sir, was very ill made about the legs and feet; a Captain Smith, who was considered the handsomest man in the army, stood to the painter for that figure.' Burr, as we know, never loved Washington. I then suggested to the Colonel that there must be many unpublished interesting facts connected with the early history of our country, and it was a pity that he did not print his remembrances. 'Sir,' said he, 'it would not be safe to do so at this day; many truths would be too humbling to be credited. I did once intend to write fully all my experience, and had collected together a large correspondence and documents, labelled them very carefully, and, with all my private correspondence and papers, had them very particularly put up in tin boxes. Perhaps, sir, you know I had a daughter?' I bowed an affirmative. 'Well, sir, when my daughter was about to take vessel for the South, I entrusted all these tin

boxes and all my other valuables to her. The ship, sir, was lost, my daughter, and all I had entrusted to her.'

"An anecdote has found its way into a newspaper, that Mr. Emmet, in a cause connected with the Manumission Society, mentioned the name of Alexander Hamilton in a pointed manner, and that Burr quailed. I neither believe that Emmet would have done such a thing in the way it is mentioned, nor that the name would have daunted the man who shot Hamilton. Take an anecdote in point. Mr. John Ant—n, a brother lawyer, had a bust of Hamilton in his office, and, from a trick or habit, A., when in earnest thought or talk, would fix his eye upon the bust. Burr had a consultation with him; and A., unconsciously, fixed his eye upon the pale Hamilton; but, instantly remembering, withdrew his sight from it, still not before Burr divined his thoughts. The Colonel quietly, slowly poked out his long fingers, pointed to the bust very deliberately and said: 'He may thank me—I made him a great man.'

"I remember being in his room; things lumbered about; a decanter of wine, and another of water, were on a table with some glasses. A female child of three or four years old, having long fair hair, came, with a quick step, into the room. Burr, with shaky hand, filled a glass with water and another with wine, and held them out invitingly towards the child, who promptly rushed to the wine. 'Only see,' said Burr, with a sort of elated air, 'how the little imp of h–ll prefers wine to water.'

"He once was anxious to procure an injunction from the Hon. Ogden Edwards, then equity judge, and I accompanied him to the rooms of the latter. I was left to move and to argue; but no ingenuity could stir the judge, he would not grant us an injunction. When we left, I said: 'Well, Colonel, we couldn't succeed!'

"'No, sir; he's so d—d obstinate.'

"The fact is, we really had no right to an injunction.

"C. E."

XIII.

BURR'S OPINION OF WASHINGTON.

By way of showing that Aaron Burr was not the only officer in the armies of the revolution who thought ill of Gen. Washington's abilities, I copy the following curious passage from Ingersoll's War of 1812, Vol. I, p. 86:—

"Gen. Thomas Craig was of the Gates or Anti-Washington party of the army of the revolution; as such, and as a man of high, uncompromising temper, had enemies, but fought his way through all grades from captaincy, with which he entered the army, to the command of a regiment, which, therefore, according to the established regulation, entitled him to the nominal rank of general, when he left it at the peace of 1783. To the last of his protracted life, which lasted till he was nearly one hundred years old, he persevered in two sentiments, which in this country of religious and political freedom, however uncongenial with those of most persons, no one can deny his right to. One was disrespect to Washington, whose talents and military capacity he always and utterly denied with unappeasable aversion; the other was, denial of the divinity of the author of the Christian religion. Since Washington's fortunate death and canonization, Gen. Craig's infidelity to him has found fewer sympathizers, probably, in Europe or America, than the deism which great numbers share with him—in whose list many place Penn, Franklin, Jefferson, John Adams, and Madison."

XIV.

BURR ON THE ANTI-SLAVERY AGITATION.

Mr. William Lloyd Garrison, in the Boston *Liberator* of January 8th, 1858, published the following reminiscence:

"It is certainly to Burr's credit that, while he was a member of the New York Legislature in 1784, a bill having been introduced for the gradual abolition of slavery in that State, 'he was in favor of a speedier extinction of the anomaly, and moved to amend the bill so as to totally abolish slavery after a certain day.' His amendment having been rejected, he voted for the original bill, which was lost. Probably it was his last effort in that direction; for in 1831–2—I cannot now determine the precise date, but not long after the publication of *The Liberator* was commenced—Aaron Burr visited Boston, and sent me a special request to have an interview with him at the Marlboro' Hotel. Curious to see so noted a man, and especially to know what could be his object in soliciting an acquaintance, I at once complied with his request, and had a free conversation with him on the subject of slavery. He received me with the suavity and politeness for which he was so remarkable, and with great adroitness undertook to dissuade me from prosecuting the anti-slavery cause, and continuing to publish *The Liberator*—skilfully setting forth the hopelessness of my object, the perils to which I should be subjected, the dangers of a general emancipation of the slaves, the power and spirit of the Slave Oligarchy, &c., &c., &c. His manner was patronizing, and, with his strong and plausible representations of the dangers and difficulties in the case, well calculated to make a deep impression on my then youthful mind. He had a remarkable eye, more penetrating, more fascinating than any I had ever seen, while his appearance was truly venerable. But he was baffled in his purpose, and soon

found that he was dealing with one who occupied a very different plane from his own; whose trust was not in man, but in the living God; who was not to be intimidated or discouraged by any portrayal of consequences, whether real or imaginary; who was animated by a love of impartial liberty, and could not stoop to any considerations of worldly policy. As he revealed himself to my moral sense, I saw that he was destitute of any fixed principles, and that unyielding obedience to the higher law was regarded by him as credulity or fanaticism. Yet I do not remember that he undertook to argue the rightfulness of slavery—his aim being, rather, to convince me both of the folly and danger of attempting to struggle with the Slave Power for its overthrow.

"We parted—he courteous and plausible to the last, and I uncompromising—and we never met again. What other object brought him to Boston I could not learn; the next day he returned to New York."

XV.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF AARON BURR.

The following is part of a paper read before the Long Island Historical Society, September 24th, 1863, by Judge John Greenwood:—

"As to Col. Burr, I enjoyed peculiar advantages of knowledge, having been for a period of about six years, namely, from about 1814 to 1820, a clerk and student in his office and in con-

stant intercourse with him, and this at a period of my life when the strongest impressions were likely to be made upon me.

"The dark side of Col. Burr's character has been very often presented, and it is unnecessary that I should make another exhibition of it. It gives me pleasure to be able to bring into the light features upon which it is more agreeable to dwell, and some of which, indeed, may be contemplated with advantage.

"Let me first speak of his *temperance* in eating and drinking. It would be natural to suppose that a man somewhat unrestricted, as it must be admitted he was, in one respect which may be regarded as in some degree correlative, would not be very much restrained in the indulgences of the table. But the fact is otherwise. His diet was very light. A cup of coffee and a roll, with but seldom the addition of an egg, and never of meat or fish, constituted his breakfast. His dinner, in a majority of cases, consisted of roasted potatoes seasoned with a little salt and butter, or perhaps of some thickened milk (called sometimes "*bonny clabber*") sweetened with sugar. A cup of black tea with a slice of bread and butter was the last meal; and these constituted, as the general rule, his whole sustenance for twenty-four hours. The exception was when some friend was invited by him to dinner. He was very fond, when seated at table, of having his favorite cat near him, and it was a pleasant thing to see puss sit on the arm of his chair and keep him company. As to spirituous liquors I have no hesitation in saying, from personal knowledge, that he never used them. His usual beverage was claret and water, sweetened with loaf sugar. His wine he bought by the cask, and had bottled at his residence. The result of his abstemious course of living was that he enjoyed uniform good health, which was seldom, if ever, interrupted.

"His *industry* was of the most remarkable character. Indeed it may with truth be said that he never was idle. He was always employed in some way, and what is more, required every one under him to be so. Sometimes, in coming through the office, and observing that I was not at work, as I

might not have been for the moment, he would say, 'Master John, can't you find something to do?' although it is safe to say that no clerk in an office was ever more constantly worked than I was. He would rise at an early hour in the morning, devote himself to business all day—for he had a large general practice—and usually retired to rest not sooner than twelve or half past twelve at night. In this way he would accomplish a vast amount of work. His perseverance and indefatigability, too, were strikingly characteristic. No plan or purpose once formed was abandoned, and no amount of labor to discourage him, or cause him to desist. To begin a work was, with him, to finish it. How widely, in this repect, he differed from some professional men of his own and the present day I need hardly say. I could recur to some greatly his juniors in years, who were, and are his very opposites in this respect. He was for having a thing done, too, as soon as it could be, and not, as some have erroneously supposed, for seeing how long it could be put off before it was begun.

"But I must say a word of his *manner in court*. He seemed, in the street and everywhere in public, to be strongly conscious that he was a mark of observation—not indeed in the sense in which Hamlet is spoken of as 'the observed of all observers,' but as an object, to some of curiosity, to others of hostile or suspicious regard. Carrying this feeling into a court-room his manner was somewhat reserved, though never submissive, and he used no unnecessary words. He would present at once the main point of his case, and as his preparation was thorough, would usually be successful. But he was not eloquent. If he thought his dignity assailed in any manner, even inferentially, his rebuke was withering in the cutting sarcasm of its few words, and the lightning glance of his terrible eyes which few could withstand. I may say in this connexion that his self-possession, under the most trying circumstances, was wonderful, and that he probably never knew what it was to fear a human being.

"If there was anything which Burr's proud spirit *supremely despised*, it was *a mean, prying curiosity*. He early inculcated on me the lesson, never to read even an opened letter addressed

to another which might be lying in my way, and never to look over another who was writing a letter. It was one of my duties to copy his letters, and I shall never forget the indignant and withering look which, on one occasion, he gave to a person in the office who endeavored to see what I was copying. Neither would he tolerate any impertinent staring or gazing at him as if to spy out his secret thoughts and reflections.

"You will be glad to hear me say something of his very *fascinating powers in conversation.* It may seem strange, if not incredible, that a man who had passed through such vicissitudes as he had, and who must have had such a crowd of early and pressing memories on his mind, should be able to preserve a uniform serenity and even cheerfulness; but such is the fact. His manners were courtly and his carriage graceful, and he had a winning smile in moments of pleasant intercourse which seemed almost to charm you. He would laugh, too, sometimes, as if his heart was bubbling with joy, and its effect was irresistible. Nobody could tell a story or an anecdote better than he could, and nobody enjoyed it better than he did himself. His maxim was *suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.* Yet, where spirits and a determined manner were required, probably no man ever showed them more effectively. Although comparatively small in person and light in frame, I have seen him rebuke and put to silence men of position in society greatly his superiors in physical strength, who were wanting in respect in their language towards him.

"Col. Burr was a *social man;* that is, he liked the company of a friend, and would spend a half hour with him in conversation most agreeably. Occasionally one with whom he had been on intimate terms, and who had shared his adventures, like Samuel Swartwout or William Hossack, would call, and have a pleasant time. Dr. W. J. McNevin was also intimate with him. He was very fond of *young company.* Children were delighted with him. He not only took an interest in their sports, but conciliated them, and attached them to him by presents. The latter, I may observe, was also one of his modes of pleasing the more mature of the gentler sex.

"He was very fond of alluding to events in his military life. Indeed I think that he chiefly prided himself upon his military character. His counsel was much sought by foreigners engaged in revolutionary enterprises, who happened to be in New York; and during the period of the revolution in Caraccas, Generals Carrera and Ribas, who took part in it, and during its existence visited New York, were on very intimate terms with him. The former was a gentleman of great talent, but of modest and retired bearing.

"There are some who suppose that Col. Burr had no virtues. This is a mistake. He was true in his friendships, and would go any length to serve a friend; and he had also the strongest affections. I shall never forget the incidents concerning the loss of his daughter Theodosia, then wife of Gov. Alston of South Carolina. Soon after Col. Burr's return from Europe to New York, he arranged for her to come on and visit him, and she set out, as is known, from Georgetown in a small schooner, called the Patriot. Timothy Green, a retired lawyer in New York, a most worthy man and an old friend of Col. Burr, went on by land to accompany her. The fact of the departure of the vessel, with his daughter and Mr. Green on board, was communicated by letter from Gov. Alston to Col. Burr, and he looked forward with anticipations of joy to the meeting which, after so many years of separation, was to take place between himself and his dear child. A full time for the arrival of the vessel at New York elapsed, but she did not come. As day after day passed, and still nothing was seen or heard of the vessel or of his daughter, that face, which had before shown no gloom or sadness, began to exhibit the sign of deep and deeper concern. Every means was resorted to to obtain information, but no tidings were ever heard of the vessel or of her upon whom all the affections of his nature had been bestowed. 'Hope deferred' did in this case, indeed, make sick, and nearly crush the heart. His symbol, which he loved occasionally to stamp upon the seal of a letter, was a rock in the tempest-tossed ocean which neither wind nor wave could move. But his firm and manly nature, which no danger or reverse nor any of the previous circumstances of

life had been able to shake, was near giving way. It was interesting though painful to witness his struggle; but he did rise superior to his grief, and the light once more shone upon his countenance. But it was ever afterwards a subdued light. There was a story afterwards that the vessel had been seized by the crew, and the passengers killed, with a view of converting her into a pirate; but this story has never been traced to any reliable source, although a publication was made at one time that a confession to this effect had been made by some dying sailor.

"Something will be expected to be said by me with regard to his duel with Gen. Hamilton. So much has been written on this subject already that I can add nothing to the history of the transaction. Every one will form an opinion for himself as to who was to blame in that unfortunate affair. I will say, however, that it was a matter to which Col. Burr, from delicacy, never referred. He was no boaster and no calumniator, and certainly he would have had no word of censure for his dead antagonist. I will relate, however, an anecdote told me by him, indicating the degree of hostility felt towards him by some after that transaction, and at the same time his own intrepidity, although to the latter he seemed not to attach the slightest importance. He was traveling in the interior of the State, and had reached a country tavern where he was to stay for the night. He was seated at a table in his room engaged in writing, when the landlord came up, and announced that two young men were below and wished to see him, and added that their manner seemed rather singular. He had heard that two very enthusiastic young gentlemen were on his track, and he was not therefore surprised at the announcement. Taking out his pistols, and laying them before him, he told the landlord to show them up. They came up, and as one was about to advance into his room, Burr told him not to approach a foot nearer. Then addressing them, he said: 'What is your business?' The foremost said, 'Are you Col. Burr?' 'Yes,' said the Colonel. 'Well,' says the young man, 'we have come to take your life, and mean to have it before we go away.' Upon this, Burr, laying his hand upon one of his pis-

tols, replied, 'You are brave fellows, are you not, to come here two of you against one man? Now if either of you has any courage, come out with me and choose your own distance, and I'll give you a chance to make fame. But if you don't accept this proposal,' bringing the severest glance of his terrible eyes to bear upon them, 'I'll take the life of the first one of you that raises his arm.' They were both cowed, and walked off like puppies.

"It may not, perhaps, be out of place to relate here another incident, illustrating Col. Burr's remarkable presence of mind, which occurred while he was in Paris. He had received a remittance of a considerable sum of money, and his valet formed a plan to rob him of it by coming upon him unawares with a loaded pistol. Burr was engaged in reading or writing in his room at a late hour at night, when the fellow entered with pistol in hand. Burr recognized him in a moment, and turning suddenly round, said to him sternly, 'How dare you come into the room with your hat on?' The valet, struck by a sudden awe, and the consciousness of having violated that decorum which had from habit become virtually part of his nature, raised his arm to take off his hat, when Burr rushed upon him, tripped him down, wrested his pistol from him, and calling for aid, had him secured and carried of.

"Col. Burr, as is well known, was what is termed a *good shot* with a pistol. To illustrate his skill in this respect, I will relate a circumstance told me by an old colored man, named 'Harry,' who was in the habit, while I was with Col. Burr, of coming to his house to clean his boots, and do little jobs. 'Harry' had lived many years with the Colonel while the latter's residence was at Richmond Hill, in the upper part of New York. The Colonel often had dinner parties, and after dinner the gentlemen would go out upon the back piazza to enjoy the air, and would amuse themselves by firing with a pistol at apples which 'Harry' would throw up for them. Said 'Harry,' laughing in the way peculiar to an old African, 'De Colonel would hit 'em almos ev'ry time while d'oder gentlemen couldn't hit 'em at all.'

"The charge against Col. Burr of *treason* has formed a

prominent part of his history. All the facts developed on the trial have been long since published, and it will not, of course, be expected that I should refer to them. I will say, however, that this was a subject upon which he was always disposed, whenever proper, to converse with those who were intimate with him. I myself have conversed with him upon it. He said he had been entirely misunderstood and misrepresented as to the object which he had in view. He had never, he stated, any design hostile to the United States or any part of it. His object was, as he said, to make himself master of Mexico, and place himself at the head of it, and if they had let him alone, he would have done it. He seemed to entertain a great contempt for Gen. Wilkinson, who was in command at the South at the time, considering him a very weak man.

"Colonel Burr, like other great men, had some remarkable *eccentricities of character*. He was very fond of all sorts of inventions, and always trying experiments. He puzzled his brains for a long time to get some motive power which would avoid the necessity of using fire or steam, of which Livingston and Fulton then held the monopoly. He had models made, and I also got my ambition excited about it. But his efforts and my own philosophical powers and chemical knowledge fell short, after a hard trial, of accomplishing the object. One great end which he desired to attain in housekeeping was to *save fuel*—not money; and I have known him to go to an expense, I should judge, of forty or fifty dollars in contrivances to save five dollars in the value of wood consumed. When Quincy's soap-stone stoves were introduced, his experiments were almost interminable.

"He was very liberal, and even reckless in spending money for certain purposes, while in others, such as bills of mechanics, he was very particular and scrutinizing. He liked to have a bill looked over very carefully, and reduced to as low an amount as the case would admit of, but, so far as I know, never practiced any dishonesty or refused to pay any just debt which he had incurred. A Scotch carpenter, by the name of Andrew Wright, who did a great deal of jobbing carpenter's work for him, and whose bills it was amongst my duties to

examine, finding the course pursued in relation to them, took it very good-naturedly, but adopted an ingenious expedient to secure a fair amount at least. He would make a gross charge for the job, and then add the items in detail, carrying out also charges for them. I will not say the amount was intended to be duplicated, but after the ordeal through which the bill passed, he got, probably, what was fairly due.

"I stated in a former part of this paper that Col. Burr was very temperate in eating and drinking. Whilst that is true, it is not true that he was so in respect to *smoking*. He was an inveterate and constant smoker. He even had cigars of an extra length manufactured to enable him the better to enjoy the tobacco, and at the same time to avoid the necessity of lighting fresh cigars after others had been consumed. It was, and is now to me incomprehensible, how a man of his slender make could stand such a constant excitement of his nervous system, and draw upon his secretory organs (for he was not a dry smoker) without being seriously injured by it. But I never noticed that they produced any deleterious effect. His constitution had, no doubt, been hardened by the exposures and discipline of his early military life, and this may be the explanation. What will you say when I tell you that in addition to this he took snuff?

"He knew a good deal about horses, and could get more service out of one without injuring him than any man I ever knew. He took journeys often in a horse and gig, and I usually accompanied him. He would hire at a livery stable, and with a common horse would travel seven miles an hour all the day through, and would carry this rate sometimes through the second, and sometimes the third day. His mode was to keep the horse up to that gait, but never to exceed it. He never attempted to pass a countryman in a wagon, without asking his permission, and in this way he avoided all annoyances from dust in little races which might otherwise have taken place.

"I have forborne thus far to refer to a matter connected with the character of Col. Burr and identified almost with his name, and although not within the plan with which I started

in this notice, I ought not perhaps to omit it. I allude, of course, to his *gallantries*. This is a topic upon which it would be impossible to speak with any particularity without transcending that limit of propriety within which all public discussions should be confined. I shall, therefore, speak of it in the most general terms. I do not believe that Col. Burr was any worse in this respect than many men of his own and of the present day who pass for better men. The difference between them is that he was much less disguised, and that he did not pretend to be what he was not. I think he was quite as much sought after by the other sex as he was a seeker. There seemed indeed to be a charm and fascination about him which continued even to a late period of his life, and which was too powerful for the frail, and sometimes even for the strong to resist. I know that he has been accused of much wrong in that respect, and it may be with truth. I feel no disposition to justify him in his course, or even to palliate what must be regarded in the best aspect as a vice. But I have heard him say, and if it be true it is certainly much in his favor, that he never deceived or made a false promise to a woman in his life. This is much more than many can say who have a much better name than he has. His married life with Mrs. Prevost (who had died before I went into his office) was of the most affectionate character, and his fidelity never questioned. There is another thing, too, which I will add to his credit. He was always a gentleman in his language and deportment. Nothing of a low, ribald, indecent, or even indelicate character ever escaped his lips. He had no disposition to corrupt others. One other thing I will add in this connection. Col. Burr, in every thing relating to business, and, indeed, in all his epistolary correspondence with men, had a special regard for the maxim that, 'things written remain,' and was very careful as to what he wrote. But with regard to the other sex, such was his confidence in them that he wrote to them with very little restraint.

"Some will perhaps like to know what were his *religious sentiments*. I do not think he was a believer in the Bible as containing a Divinely revealed religion, nor in the superhuman

nature of Christ and what are deemed the main points of the scheme of salvation through Christ. He was, however, very reticent in these respects, and may have been, as many are, more of a skeptic than a disbeliever. He went to church occasionally to hear some remarkable preacher, and always behaved reverently.

"I must point you to one admirable and strong characteristic in him. He sought with young men, in whom he felt an interest, to graft them as it were with his indomitable will, energy, and perseverance I can truly say, that although I was often overtasked beyond my powers, and even to the injury, no doubt, of my health, so that his course seemed to me to be over-exacting and oppressive, yet that he constantly incited me to progress in all the various modes and departments of mental culture, even in music, the influence of which he deemed of great importance, although he had but little taste for, and no knowledge of it himself; and that my success in life, so far as I have succeeded, has been owing to the habits of industry and perseverance which were formed under his training.

"Col. Burr was rather under the medium height, but well proportioned, of light but sinewy frame, and of great powers of endurance both of body and mind. His gait was measured, and rather that of the soldier than the civilian. But he moved along so quietly that his pace, to some, might seem almost stealthy.

"As to the *character of his mind* it would be probably presumptuous in me to attempt to analyse it. If I should express an opinion it would be that it was not large, comprehensive, and philosophical, but rather quick, penetrating, and discerning. He was a shrewd planner, and indefatigable and persevering in carrying out his plans, although he did not always succeed in accomplishing them. He was a good scholar, acquainted with polite literature, and spoke the French and Spanish—the former fluently. I think his heart was not in the profession of the law, but that he followed it principally for its gains. He was, however, a good lawyer, was versed in the common, civil, and international law; acquainted gen-

erally with the reports of adjudicated cases, and in preparing important cases usually traced up the law to its ancient sources. But political and military life seemed to interest him more than any thing else, although he never neglected his business. He prided himself probably more upon his military qualities than upon any other. If he could have gratified his ambition by becoming King or Emperor of Mexico, he would no doubt have been in his glory. But this was not to be. For years after I was in his office, he continued the practice of the law, but with his advancing years his business gradually dropped off, although the fruits of the well-known Eden suits left him still a small fund. His alliance or rather *mesalliance* with Madame Jumel, and their divorce on her complaint, were among the later and more unfortunate events of his life. He was reduced gradually to obscurity and poverty, and died, as is known, on Staten Island with scarcely a friend at his side.

"Thus terminated the career of one who played so prominent a part on the great stage of public life in the days of Washington, Jefferson, and Hamilton.

"The lesson which may be learned from his life and its termination is, that however distinguished a man may otherwise be, if he lacks those virtues which are recognized as being essential to the well-being of society, and sets at defiance the opinions and sentiments of the community concerning them, he can never permanently succeed. Such a course reacts upon its author, and there is an even-handed justice that commends the ingredients of the poisoned chalice to his own lips. He could have outlived the effect of the duel with Hamilton, and even the influence of his arrest and trial for treason, if his private character had been such as to secure the public respect and esteem. But unfortunately it was not."

XVI.

BURR'S LAST FRIEND.

The benevolent and gifted lady who solaced the last years and days of Burr's life is now no more. Her name was Mrs. Joshua Webb. She was one of those women, so numerous in the world that almost every person in it can call one to mind, who seem formed by nature for the sole purpose of being sacrificed to the welfare and happiness of others, and who, in that sacrifice, find their own happiness. She inherited a very liberal annuity (£600), one half of which she sold, after the death of her first husband, to pay his debts. When she received Burr, paralytic and helpless, she was keeping a large boarding house in Broadway, near the Bowling Green, then the most fashionable quarter in the city. She gave up her own apartments that the dying politician might be more conveniently lodged; and she attended him with the most affectionate and untiring assiduity.

Mrs. Webb was a complete realization of the expression, "thorough-bred." In her youth she must have been a dazzling beauty, and she retained, to the last, a wonderful vivacity of mind, and charm of manner. There was nothing she would not do to oblige and serve a friend. Never was there a more "game" woman. By the side of a man she esteemed and trusted, she would have calmly braved poverty the most pinching and hopeless, and obloquy the most universal and intense; and this, too, without losing her temper or her cheerfulness. There is no court in which she would not have shone, and maintained a lasting sway; but the place where she exhibited best her character and her talents was the sick-room of some neglected or fallen man, whose chief title to her care was, that he had no one else to care for him. She had the true nurse's touch—delicate, dexterous, and firm. She

was never weary of her work. She could amuse by her conversation; she was an excellent reader; she could sing the songs of her native Scotland; she had a hundred pleasant ways of raising the drooping spirits of the sick and miserable. Her mere presence was medicine given in wine. As a mother, in a world full of good mothers, it would be hard to find her equal for fondness and devotion. After a long life spent in self-denying and unrequited toils, continued to the last of her strength, she has gone to a sphere where, I trust, those who have nobly ministered to others, will themselves be nobly ministered unto.

The controversy excited by the publication of this work in 1857, called forth from Mrs. Webb a statement respecting the papers left by Col. Burr. The most valuable of his papers went down in the vessel in which his daughter, Theodosia, was lost. Touching certain other papers, Mrs. Webb wrote:

"Some two years previous to the death of Col. Burr, who was then residing at the corner of Gold and Fulton streets, sick and bedridden, I went, accompanied by his relative and staunch friend, the late Mr. Ogden E. Edwards, to see him, and found him helpless, and needing greatly the attention that women only can bestow. He had a female servant, who attended to him, as all hirelings do, with apathy. Mr. Edwards, for some time previous, had attended to the Colonel's financial concerns, received his pensions, supplied his wants, &c., with a zeal and fidelity that commanded the Colonel's gratitude, and the good feeling of the few friends that time had left the prosecuted old man. There lay, in helpless lóneliness, the man whom I had been taught from childhood to regard as a great, but a doomed man. My impressions had been received from my father, who knew him well, and loved as well as he knew him; and who could not have loved a bad man. For many years Col. Burr had been the friend of myself and family. Providence had placed me in a situation to afford him those comforts which his condition required. I prepared rooms for him in my house, and he accepted my invitation to come, as my guest, and remain as long as he pleased. He came, and with him came five or six large packing cases, containing his

law papers, letters, &c. I was then first informed that Mr. Davis was about writing the Colonel's life.

"He desired me to let Mr. Davis and Mr. Townsend, who were friends of long standing, have access to the papers when they wished. They generally came and went together, and took with them such of the papers as were required for the biography, under the inspection always of Mr. Edwards and myself, by the request of Col. Burr. When it was known that the house was to be demolished to give place to the present structure, the Hon. Ogden Edwards and myself had a conversation with the Colonel in regard to his papers, when it was determined that the large bulk of them should be consigned to the care and custody of Mr. Ogden Edwards, the ever faithful and untiring friend of the Colonel, leaving the other portion in my possession, where some of them now remain; the rest having been delivered by me to Mr. Davis, and taken away by him on a cart in sacks, from my residence in Brooklyn.

"Thus then, were the papers in my possession for upwards of two years, and often, at the Colonel's request, looked over by Mr. Edwards and myself. Let me here say that *I never saw a letter or document among the papers of Col. Burr that would bring a blush to the cheek, or a tear to the eye of any one.* If there were letters of such a kind, they must have escaped the rigid scrutiny of two sincere friends of the Colonel, to whom his reputation was, and to one of whom it is, still dear —the other having gone to join him in that far off, better land, where envy and malice are unknown.

"All who knew Col. Burr, knew him to be a silent, secretive man. Is it likely, then, that one who had suffered persecution deeply as he had done, would, even if he had the power, expose others to the tortures he had suffered? As early as the year 1829, the husband of the writer of this made preparation, by the examination of documents and frequent consultations with Col. Burr, for writing his biography. This was long before Mr. Davis was thought of for performing such service. If circumstances had not prevented the fulfilment of that intention, Col. Burr would have had, at least, justice

done to him. The whole life of Col. Burr contradicts the statement made by Mr. Davis, respecting letters, &c. Col. Burr suffered, but he suffered silently. I do not believe that the man exists, or ever did exist, of whom he would have spoken evil, or to whom he would have done an injury. I do not speak unadvisedly, but from the information of a dear departed parent, who esteemed Col. Burr enough to consign his grandson to his care, and his small inheritance to his guardianship—a trust that he faithfully fulfilled. The writer of the article in the Albany *Journal* above alluded to, labors under more than one mistake. He says Col. Burr boarded in Broadway. Col. Burr did not board; he was received as an old and valued friend, without fee or reward. He was at no expense, save the wages of his nurse, who came with him. And if that writer means that Col. Burr planted 'sharp thorns' in my pillow, he again labors under a mistake; for all the recollections I have now, or ever had, of Col. Burr, have been kindly and thornless; and there is not an act of my life for which I am so grateful as that I was

"Col. Burr's Last Friend."

XVII.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF COL. BURR.

An intelligent writer has described it in the New York *Leader* for January 2, 1864:

"I knew him personally, from my boyhood, and saw him often in the quiet scenes of domestic life, in the house of a gentleman who was always his friend.

"His personal appearance was peculiar; under the medium height, his figure was well-proportioned, sinewy, and elastic, appearing in every movement to be governed more by the mental than its mere physical attributes. His head was not large, but, as phrenologists say, well-proportioned. His forehead was high, protruding, but narrow directly over the eyes, and widening immediately back. The head was well, even classically poised on the shoulders; his feet and hands were peculiarly small; the nose was rather large, with open, expanding nostrils; and the ears so small as almost to be a deformity. But the feature that gave character and tone to all, and which made his presence felt, was the eye. Perfectly round, not large, deep hazel in color, it had an expression which no one who had seen it could ever forget. No man could stand in presence of Col. Burr, with his eyes fixed on him, and not feel that they pierced his innermost thoughts. There was a power in his look—a magnetism, if I may be allowed the expression—which few persons could resist.

"I remember an anecdote told me years ago. Col. Burr was traveling from Albany to New York, in the winter by stage. The second night the coaches stopped at Poughkeepsie, and on this occasion an itinerant juggler had an exhibition at the stage tavern. The passengers, for want of some other amusement, attended, and Col. Burr became one of the audience. Soon after the performer came out, he walked up to Col. B., and, handing him a silver dollar, requested him to put it in his kerchief, and hold it tightly, as he intended to perform his best trick with it. Col. B. complied; the performer every few minutes asked him if he was sure he still held it, the performance ended and the man came to get the dollar 'Why,' said Col. B., 'I see no trick in this.' 'Don't you? Well, I think it the best trick of the evening; for the moment I saw you I knew you would see through every trick I did, and I gave you the money to distract your attention from me.'

"The expression of his face, when I knew him—it was first in 1823—bore in repose a sad and melancholy air, yet the features were mobile, and when addressing ladies, uttering

some pleasantry or witticism, the smile around his mouth was literally beautiful, and his eyes would lose their piercing look, and become tender and gentle. His voice was not powerful, but round, full, and crisp, and though never loud, was tender or impressive as the occasion required. His elocution in conversation was perfect, always precisely suited to the occasion, and the style of thought to which he was giving expression. His language was terse, almost epigrammatical, and he rarely indulged in illustrations or metaphor; his words were always the most apt that could be used, and he had command of a vocabulary which would make Roguet of the Tesauris envious. His manners were polished, his motions graceful and easy, yet he never for a moment lost his dignified and noble bearing.

"In mere physical beauty, in elegance of face and figure, in brilliancy of the eye, I have seen many men superior to Col. Burr; but in a bearing and presence which you felt to be something beyond other men, with character in every motion and expression, in a life of over forty years, and after seeing all the great men of the country during that period, I have never seen his peer. He wore his hair—which, till quite late in life, was long and thick, excepting on the front of the head—massed up on the top held by a small shell comb, the whole head profusely powdered. Apropos of this high mass of powdered hair. After his duel with Hamilton, there was a vulgar idea that Col. Burr always went armed, and was ready to shoot any one. He was boarding at a house in Albany, in Washington street, my informants being fellow-boarders. On one occasion, a black waiter, in removing a dish with meat from the table, accidentally struck Col. Burr's hair, sending a shower of powder over the table. Burr, quickly turning, said: 'You careless scoundrel.' The waiter dropped the dish and contents on the floor, and fled as rapidly as possible towards the kitchen, exclaiming: 'Don't shoot me, Col. Burr, I didn't mean to do it!' There was profound silence at the table for several minutes.

"His usual dress was a blue single-breasted coat with standing collar, a buff vest, and dark pants; in winter, a fur cap,

and buckskin mittens. I have been thus elaborate in my description of his appearance, because no one of his biographers have described him, and because much of his influence in life, and at the bar, was measurably owing to his looks, manners, voice, and eye.

XVIII.

LAST WILL OF AARON BURR.

I, Aaron Burr, of the City of New York, now residing at number 23 Nassau street, do make and publish this my Last Will and Testament as follows: I appoint Matthew L. Davis, Peter Townsend, and Henry P. Edwards, Attorney and Counsellor at Law, my Executors. I give the charge and custody of my private papers to the said M. L. Davis, to be disposed of at his discretion. I propose in a Codicil to be hereunto annexed to give a list of my debts, and to point out the resources from which they are to be paid, and I authorize my said Executors to settle all suits and claims which I may have against any person whatsoever, and to give receipts and acquitences thereupon, and to sell any land or real estate to which I may be entitled at the time of my death, and to give deeds therefor. And I do hereby revoke and annul all former and other Wills and Testaments by me made. In Testimony whereof I have hereunto subscribed my name, this twenty-first day of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-four. A. Burr. Signed, published, and declared by the said Aaron Burr, and in his presence, or in the presence of each other, the word "resources" being interlined before sign-

ing. Charles F. Hill, No. 15 Barclay street, apprentice to John Tallman, Third Ward. Henry Oscar Taylor, apprentice to A. Burr, Second Ward, City of New York.

Whereas, on the twenty-first day of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-four, I made and published my Last Will and Testament, and therein declared my intention of making a Codicil thereto: Now, in pursuance of such intention, I do hereby make, and declare, and publish this as a Codicil to my said Will. First, I give to Bridget Williams the sum of nine hundred dollars, being the balance of money left in my hands for this purpose, with which I direct my Executors to purchase an annuity payable to her during her natural life, payable quarterly. Second, I give to my two daughters, known by the names of Frances Ann, aged about six years, now residing with Mrs. ———, and under the immediate care of her daughter, Mrs. ———; the other daughter, named Elizabeth, being about the age of two years, now residing with Mrs. ———, both well known to Henry O. Taylor—*all the rest*, and residue of my Estate, both real and personal, and to the survivor of them their heirs and assigns forever. Nevertheless, I give to Samuel Corp two hundred dollars, being in consideration of an act of great liberality, shown towards me more than twenty years ago. I regret that it has not been in my power at an earlier date to give any evidence of my gratitude towards him. In Testimony whereof I have hereunto subscribed my name, this eleventh day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-five. A. Burr. Signed, published, and declared by the said Aaron Burr, in the presence of us, who have hereunto subscribed our names at the request of the said Aaron Burr, and in his presence, *or* in the presence of each other. The words "being the balance of money left in my hands for this purpose," on first page, being interlined before signing. Hy. Oscar Taylor, No. 55 Gold street, in the 2nd Ward, Student at Law of the City of New York. Charles F. Hill, Gentleman, No. 55 Gold street, in the Second Ward of the City of New York.

I, Aaron Burr, of the First Ward of the City of New York,

Do make and publish this as a further Codicil to my Will, dated the twenty-first day of April, in the year one thousand eight hundred and thirty-four. Item, I give to the Duke de Bassano —— Francs, for which he has my note, payable without interest, which sum he advanced me in the most liberal and delicate manner, having learnt, as I was afterwards informed by the celebrated Monsieur Denon, Directeur General *Desnucsses* a Paris, which I very much regret, that it has not been sooner in my power to repay, and which I now beg him to receive with my thanks. I direct that all my private papers, except law papers appertaining to suits now depending, be delivered to my friend, Matthew L. Davis, Esq., to be disposed of at his discretion, directing him nevertheless to destroy or to deliver to the parties interested all such as may in his estimation be calculated to affect injuriously the feelings of individuals against whom I have no complaint. In Witness whereof I have hereunto subscribed my name, this twenty-sixth day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-five. A. Burr. Signed, published, and declared by the said Aaron Burr, in the presence of us who have hereunto subscribed our names at the request of the said Aaron Burr, and in his presence, and in the presence of each other. Witness, A. E. Hosack, M. D., No. 40 Warren street, Third Ward, City of New York. H. Oscar Taylor, Student at Law, 127 Clinton street, Thirteenth Ward, City of New York.

The further Codicil to the Will of Aaron Burr, dated the twenty-first day of April, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-four. Further I direct and order my pictures to be given to my two daughters upon the day of their marriage, in the meantime to be in the custody of my friend and kinsman, Theodosia Prevost, by whom the division is to be made. Item, I give to Henry Oscar Taylor such Books, and Maps, and wearing apparel, belonging to me, as may be found in my house at my death. Item, I give to my friend and kinsman, Theodosia Prevost, the picture of my daughter, which is enamelled on a china cup, which is believed to be in the upper drawer of my yellow desk. In Testimony

whereof I have hereunto subscribed my name this twenty-seventh day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-five. A. Burr. Signed, published, and declared by the said Aaron Burr, in the presence of us who have hereunto subscribed our names at the request of the said Aaron Burr, and in his presence, and in the presence of each other. The words "fifteenth day of October" on 5th and 6th lines of this page struck out, and the words "twenty-seventh day of December" interlined on 6th line. Ogden E. Edwards, 28 Varick street, New York. Hy. Oscar Taylor, Student at Law, No. 127 Clinton street, Thirteenth Ward, New York.

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